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Agostino da Montefeltro

Conferences

OF

Agostino da Montefeltro

DELIVERED IN ROME DURING LENT 1889.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

BY

Charles Aubrey Ansell.

With Approbatory Letter by His Eminence

The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE following Lenten Conferences of Padre Agostino, O.S.F. (da Montefeltro), now presented in English, were preached by him at Florence in 1887, and at the Church of San Carlo al Corso, at Rome, 1889.

In offering a translation of this remarkable Lent it seems proper to the occasion to say that instead of the confessedly "*adapted*" "*selections*," such as *alone* have hitherto appeared in English and under Protestant auspices, *it is here given absolutely whole and entire.* Catholic faith and morals being everywhere identically one and the same, in England as in Italy and all the world over, as well as in every moment of the Christian era from the foundation of the Church by our Divine Lord, the utterances of a Catholic priest require neither adaptation nor selection to meet the exigencies of sect, ism, or time. Would that our brethren who so facilely assume the *name* of Catholic, but are not of the one fold, could but realize the utter incongruity of their position. They might then reflect, and, doing so, see the wisdom of applying at Peter's own door to know what kind of a house his is. Instead, they only inquire, if at all, of those outside of it who, notwithstanding they *may think* they do, most assuredly *do not* know it. Many of those who need to seek it hang back from the straightforward inquiry, lest they should be beguiled by a counterfeit of Truth; and are thus verily deceived by this most blinding scheme of the Tempter, who knows so well, and fears so much, the household of Peter, the Church of Christ and sole abode of God's omnipotent Truth.

C. A. A.

St. Aloysius,
Bournemouth.
Septuagesima Sunday, 1890.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER OF H.E. THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER TO TRANSLATOR.

Archbishop's House,

Westminster, S.W.

Feb. 6, 1890.

DEAR MR. ANSELL,

. . . . . You have done well to give a careful and complete translation of P. Agostino's Sermons, because a translation has been published in which the Catholic doctrines have been either toned down or omitted altogether.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

HENRY E., CARD., ARCHBP.

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I.

THE TRUTH.

My intention in speaking to you is to unfold the truth as the only guide that mortals ought to follow in the rugged path of life. When one considers the triumphal march of the present century, the apostles of material progress stand astounded at the incessant advance, marvelling at the conquests of science and liberty. The wise man, on the other hand, instead of judging superficially, thinks with sorrow and fear of the future of modern society, because wherever he directs his gaze he sees nothing but unsatisfied aspirations, and hears but the lamentation of grief, and the voice of imprecation.

Now what is the source of this alarming state of affairs? It is that we live in an element of falsehood; it is that intelligence, love, character, principle, everything, is false. It is that in society there are two classes always antagonistic, the rich and the poor; the former, for the most part, rejecting every ideal, while the latter, for the most part, fight under the banner of Christ. It is to these last that I give my thoughtful attention; it is for them alone that I suffer and pray.

Once I also had the misfortune of straying from truth. What you may have read of me I know not, or whether or no it be true, as I have never wished to know what has been written

about me, and have spoken neither of myself nor my past. Formerly, as I said, I followed the ways of sin; but my mother's prayers and the help of God induced me to return to the right way. Being converted, I felt how much there is in the world to crush and desolate the heart, I understood the sorrows of the weak and the oppressed, and an all-powerful and longing desire was born in my heart, the desire of confirming in the truth those who possess it, of helping those who have lost it to refind it. If I be deficient in virtue, yet shall you find my lips ever ready with the word of sincerity and comfort, the word of truth, of that truth in which every Christian ought to live and die, and with which truth upon my lips I ever pray God that I may close my eyes in death.

I come not among you in the name of a party; I come in the holy name of God. To you I bring a frank apostolic word, not a message of discord. We live in an age in which to the achievements sought through error and want of principle we must oppose the bold affirmation of truth. And this truth I shall not keep prisoner within my lips, but shall make it gleam in the light of the sun, just as in the brightness of its light waves the banner of Christ, upon which I have inscribed these two most holy words—Charity, Truth.

Jesus, my divine Master! Essential Truth and Charity, inspire my words with your truth and charity; give them the holy energy of grace, kindle in our hearts the flame of love, so that the germ of truth given us in baptism may grow, and, luxuriating within us, may make us saints.

Jesus said, "I am the truth" (St. John xiv. 6); "He that heareth you heareth me" (St. Luke x. 16). The chief evil of modern society is a disregard

of truth, of that truth which is the beginning of all well-being, the beginning of virtue, of beatitude, of ecstasy, of ineffable raptures. Many philosophers came to teach this or that truth, but none of them, like Jesus, could say, I "teach you *all* truth,"[1] and, moreover, "I am the truth."[2] The history of the world, of its revolutions, of its errors and conquests, is nothing but a history of war against truth.

The present century has taken for its device that of Pilate: "*Quid est veritas?*"[3] Everyone says he wishes to espouse the truth, to teach and defend it. But they have the sincerity of that angel in *Paradise Lost*, who, contemplating the sun, cries out in rage, "O, thou with glory crowned, I hate thy beams."[4] Everybody talks of truth without understanding it. Still, there are fundamental truths, bases without which the world would be an insoluble enigma. Formerly these truths, through the secret of the moral strength of our forefathers, were not discussed. To-day, one makes a furious opposition to them; to-day, philosophers demolish them, and the work of demolition, begun among the cultured classes, has grown up in the midst of the people.

What is the consequence? Eternal doubt and continual negation.

To-day, one combats not only the Church, the Pope, Christianity, but also God himself. To-day, society is as a ship without a pilot, on the point of being wrecked; to-day, one denies Providence, and, for its admirable government, substitutes the word Matter, Eternal Matter, through which man becomes a material force, without knowing whence it comes or whither it tends. In our day, all phenomena must be studied and discussed in order that, from their causes, effects may be anticipated.

1 St. John xiv. 6. 2 St. John xiv. 6. 3 St. John xviii. 38.
4 Milton. *Cf. Par. Lost*, Bk. iv. lines 32-37.

In our day, to war against God and truth, one cries: "Why should we think of the future?" "Why of God? But is there, perchance, any" "future?—any God? The immortality of the" "soul is a Utopia; there are no such sublime" "ideals. As to immortality, man is but the equal" "of a beast. Does duty exist? Is there such a" "thing as religion?—virtue? One must respect" "family relationships, honour, property, one's" "word."

And these are the principal foundations upon which one disputes as if they were unsolved problems: this is the result of perverted intelligence.

And then from perverted intelligence there arises the perversion of love. There are no more sublime sentiments; one no longer understands spiritual pleasures; the beauty of love is gone, for the object loved is unworthy of predilection. One runs after animal pleasures, and will no longer listen to him who speaks of sacrifice, glory, abnegation; but to him who talks of feasting, balls, theatres, and sensual pleasures. Into these last one throws his whole self, all his ardour; into virtue nothing. The misfortunes of his country, the sorrows of his family no longer touch the man; but gaily-dressed women, with a seductive smile on their lips, allure and move him instead, drag him from feast to feast, and cause him to drain the chalice of every vice.

To this perversion of love, the perversion of habits follows as a natural consequence. It is impossible to act well when one believes and loves ill. Under the ruins of truth virtue will lie buried; while honesty and probity will disappear, and, from scepticism sensualism will be born. From this strait a man will be able to escape, but a country never. It would be necessary to remodel its education from the beginning.

Our wretched youth remain without principle, without faith in a future, without innocence; mature age makes each indifferent to his own and his family's welfare, and, consequently, old age no more has repentance. Everywhere there are evil-doers: no more Sacraments, no more prayer, no churches, only a terrible hatred of everything in connection with religion.

The domestic hearth is a thing of horror; the nuptial couch without honour, husband and wife without fidelity, the child without respect, matrimony without sanctity.

The family is humbled, its property disputed. Usurious speculations strangle every generous impulse; the immoral failings of theft and robbery are the mode. Charity itself is no more to be found in its true guise, but, dressed up in alluring and worldly forms, has been falsified

Obedience? To obey is a shame. He who holds any authority is a tyrant, against whom it is lawful to rebel; everyone wants to be his own master and to govern himself. In this way anarchy and rebellion takes possession of the public mind, and everything is overthrown. Peoples so lacerate themselves by internal party fraction, that the greatest energy is weakened and the grandest ideals are destroyed, while foreign war is either impeded or becomes impossible.

In consequence of the perversion of habits, character is wanting. No one is interested in anything but his own pleasure and convenience. There are no more strong characters; no more generous men, ready for sacrifice. Idleness and egotism are everywhere. Instead of the brave man inflamed with love for the truth, fighting for his own faith, instead of the strong who despise every deception and fly every baseness, there is to-day the speculator who enriches

himself by the blood of the people, the seditious man who ruins his country for the triumph of his own principles. Money is the idol of the moment; man has become useless to himself, to his neighbour, to his country, simply because he has abased himself by vanity, simply because he has suffered doubt to enter his mind.

One must not delude one's self; we are in the midst of a crisis which will form an epoch in history. The storm is thickening, and a terrified world asks itself, "Where is salvation?"

We are not wanting in gold and silver, the materialistic anchors of salvation. Industries flourish, commerce is extending; in no other century but our own has there been such grand and marvellous progress. In what, then, are we wanting? We are wanting in men, we are wanting in character.

And what are the causes? Very many: the principal of which are concupiscence, ignorance of religious principles, brutal passions. And then the heretical press, the friend of scandal; naturalism, the apology of vice; atheistic journals; immoderate luxury, the ruin of families, which creates the motive of unworthy speculations on the working classes, treated no longer as brethren, but as machines for the accumulation of riches; theatres; and, lastly, photography, lithography, and a thousand other forms of producing vice that provokes the most insane passions.

To such a pass have we arrived to-day that even virtue is sold, and one traffics in the blood and honour of the people.

But man cannot remain in this state, for it leads neither to his natural nor to his supernatural end. Following such a life he cannot be happy, since it does not correspond to the end for which he was created. The greatness of a country

has never resulted from pleasure. Tentalus, the modern sensual man, never arrives at the happiness he is in search of, but becomes the victim of his own corrupt morals and doubt, and feels the hand of God constantly weighing on him. Without joy, without tranquility, faintness seizes on him, both spirit and body prey upon themselves, and too frequently he ends his wretched life by suicide.

Now, what happens to individuals, happens also to countries. Doubt, incredulity, sophism, do not make the masses happy. Physical succeeds the moral decadence, and then the people are near to disappearing from the face of the earth.

Seeing, then, the cause of the evil, now it is necessary to learn the remedies. Many believe they possess, and pretend to exhibit them, but they are empirics and charlatans.

Some, to reform society, propose the institution of new principles; others would like to change our now obsolete customs. Others, again, place the salvation of society in the re-distribution of wealth, in the secularization of instruction, in release from the matrimonial bond, in warring against the ministers of God, in the repudiation of Christianity and the ousting of Christ from society. Behold their remedies!

Insensates! They want to move the world, as if it were a truss of straw. They, whose attempts and their results are already known! When their science can no longer save the people they come out with their devastating theories, and war between nation and nation has become more terrible, hatreds have increased, misery has been augmented.

Their remedies, either purely material or purely rational, are always disproportionate to the evil. The vague morality of our philosophers is in-

capable of staying the violence of the passions which lead to excess; unbridled cupidity, which makes its own victims. Abstract theories do not provide for any of the wants of the people. Neither is anger repressed, nor is the will elevated by such palliatives. But is there nothing to hope for? nothing to fear? Can you possibly give the people the happiness you promise? No. And then when they find they have been deceived they will rebel, and turn their violence against you. You will restrain them by force? But they will laugh at, despise you, and will follow their own devices. You have taught them that there is nothing after death, and they, with the terrible logic of our days, will apply your doctrines and from them will cull their only consequence, dynamite.

Impotent are the remedies proposed by human wisdom. Worthless are all your books to reclaim the libertine, the violent, the avaricious. *A bad tree cannot yield good fruit (cf.* St Mat. vii. 18).

We must, then, seek another remedy, and I propose, after a brief pause, with the help of God, to point it out to you myself.

How can society be saved from the ruin into which it has fallen? In only one way: by returning to Christianity which renews the soul, love, habits, character. He who knows Jesus, knows the beginning and the end of life; he no longer doubts, because he knows the abiding laws which govern the life of man; he no longer wanders from sophism to sophism, from system to system, for he knows well that he must love and serve God only, love his neighbour as himself, respect family honour, labour, and its products, that he must love his country, and, even at the cost of his life, defend it.

Thus, the intelligence being renewed, love also

is renovated, and in true love the character becomes sublime, every virtue becomes incarnate. To be strong we must be guided by an idea and by a will; an idea, the light that draws out and kindles enthusiasm; a will that gives impulse, and derives from Heaven strength for its aim. Christianity gives generous sentiments, revivifies energetic virtues, speaks to us of that God who re-opens the gate of eternal hope, Who will judge us and pronounce our sentence.

Only let tranquility enter into our souls, love into our hearts; and strife, jealousy and egotism, fatal banes of society, will cease; then will the rich go hand in hand with the poor, the strong will help the weak, and the people will breathe.

The ancients, groaning under oppression and vice, proved the efficacy of Christianity which renewed them in charity and truth. The moderns, if they would be saved, must return to the old way. Every other way is insufficient.

One day society, threatened by a thousand evils, will be compelled in its own interest to return to that Christ Who to-day is despised, but Who will then be invoked to save their honour, their liberty, their family.

On that day the Apostolic cry, "Domine, salva nos, perimus,"[1] will resound throughout the world, and will save it.

Like Cæsar's pilot, who brought fortune to the empire, so Christianity brings prosperity to the world.

[1] "Lord, save us, we perish" (St. Mat. viii. 25).

II.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

One great evil, and an incomprehensible perturbation, acting like a terrible malady of the body by which all its members are put out of order, torments society in our day. This evil, itself the source of so many others, this uneasiness that ends in generating chaos in ideas, in love, in habits, in character, is the diminution of truth, and, above all, of the truth of the existence of God.

Materialists and Positivists go about devising what they can substitute for God, the necessary Being in Whom we all live and move and are,[1] for God, the Author of creation, of ideals of perfection, of science, of justice. These misguided men do not consider that every thing is based on God, love of truth, of beauty, of goodness, respect for the sanctity of the family, virtue and the happiness of the people; nor do they even suspect that without God man is lost, that the spirit bewilders and loses itself in fatal systems.

What, in our day, has become of the dogma of the existence of God? You have but to turn your eyes around you to find an answer. To-day men deny, above all things, the existence of God. Science no longer interrogates Him, and, whenever it is necessary to affirm this dogma, it ceases its investigations. Literature ignores Him, poets insult

[1] Acts xvii. 28.

Him, history is being recast to expunge the *name* of God from its pages. From schools, hospitals, homes, not only is the cross banished, but it is thought to blot out even the memory of its *having* reigned. Modern atheism has no longer any modesty, but shows itself in the light of the sun; it permeates everywhere, vaunts itself in the Senate House, in the Courts of Justice, on the stage, in the press, in the school, and worst of all, penetrates the sanctity of even the domestic hearth. Behold the danger of our epoch.

God does not exist! This is the supreme aberration of our time. But this blasphemy is on the lips of only the impious, over the heads of whom hangs the divine justice.

God does exist! Here is the truth. Let us be firm and insist upon it.

My God! do Thou inspire me to-day with words powerful to impart to others this my own most lively faith; give me words full of that grace which subdues the heart.

Among the ancients there was, it is true, now and then an atheist, but every one used to shrink from him as a man guilty of fatal doctrine. It has been reserved for us to assist at the sad spectacle of heresy attempting by every artifice to rehabilitate itself in public opinion, and especially in that of the young. In order to attract the weak, allured by excess of self-love, every effort is directed to sustain the proposition that atheism is the only doctrine for the strong-minded, and that it is the product of true science.

But in this attempt the innovators urge arguments so weak that their real poverty becomes apparent.

One of these atheists having collected all the arguments in support of their assertion, has explained, published and distributed them among the people, hoping to draw them to their false theories. But the people feel that there is a God, despise the transparent arguments of atheism, and are convinced that those who deny God are the impious alone, whose interest it is that He should not exist.

Another atheist used to say: "It is the priests who make you believe in the existence of God; and it is they who have invented Him." But how? These priests, how could they have been priests, unless the existence of God, of Whom they declared themselves the ministers, had been believed before them? One might just as well say that children had invented their father. No one has invented God. We feel there is a God, and this is enough. "I feel that God exists, I do not feel that He does not exist," said and wrote La Bruyère. The principle of the existence of God is inspired in our souls from childhood; to believe it is a part of our nature.

Humanity has always believed in God, and it is not the belief of a country only, but of every country; the belief in God is a characteristic of humanity. Historians who have passed away with their age, travellers who have visited the most remote regions of the earth, naturalists and philosophers, all have the idea of God common Talk to the young shepherd of the Infinite, and he does not understand you, but talk to him of God, and he will answer that he believes in Him.

To disbelieve in God one must make an effort, despise the living whose unanimous consent is faith in God, insult the dead who closed their eyes with the name of God on their lips.

The atheist joins with D'Alembert; *that to*

believe, or not to believe, in what does not exist is equally valuable. Then there are so many fallacious beliefs in God, different from what He is, that they decide for atheism. Error! We are not speaking of the *essence*, but of the *existence* of God. One can have a false conception of God, and yet the consent of His existence may coëxist with all error. *Deum esse nemo negat*, says Cicero.

But, one says again, it is not true that *all* believe in God. Well, if there be any who do not believe in Him, which is not, however, demonstrated, they are rare exceptions which prove the rule.

Universality of belief is an undeniable *fact*, and to explain this fact demands a proportionate cause. One cannot say that this is the effect of prejudices which vary according to time and place; nor of the inconstant passions: nor of ignorance, because that idea supposes the knowledge of first principles; nor of fear, which would vanish at one's own dissolution: nor of superstition, because this rather confirms the fact of the universal belief in God; nor, lastly, of politics, because legislation presupposes, though it does not impose, religious belief. One cannot, then, explain the constant fact of the existence of God, unless through inclination inherent to human nature, and which is not the result of the senses or of the passions, but comes through intelligence, which is a law of our spiritual part: of which law, nothing has been able to arrest the progress.

Experience and reasoning attest that when a species universally and constantly tends to a given object, it is inevitable that such object must exist. But now the whole human race tends constantly and universally to God; therefore God exists.

There are two kinds of atheists, unconscious and conscious; the former believe not because

they know not; the latter because they will not. These dictate *ex professo (dettano cattedre)* and are called professors and doctors of humanity.

Grand progress in truth! After such studies, after a thousand attempts anent their ideal, they finish by placing themselves on a level with savages. They have but to advance their theories a little further to find themselves on a level with monkeys.

Aristotle, Seneca, Cicero, St. Thomas Aquinas, all agree that:—That which the greatest number hold as true, is true by nature. "*Quod semper, quod ubique*" has always been held as the voice of Nature, of God. But atheism, profound anomaly, taking exception to it, places its votaries beyond the pale of natural law.

Yet some may say: If faith in God be a characteristic which distinguishes mankind, how is it that there are atheists?

But are there really any atheists at all? I doubt it. In fact, the efforts they make to convince themselves and others that God does not exist prove that they feel the influence of that superior power from which they cannot escape. If "God" be but an empty word, why so anxious to obliterate it everywhere? He who has no existence cannot be an enemy. See here the most powerful proof of the existence of God.

Others object: If God exist, why does He not conduct us all *per force* to happiness?

Simply because God wills that happiness be attained by our free will, which He has given us for this very end.

Still, if God exist, why does He not show Himself?

But, entering the Duomo in Florence: that Duomo, does it not speak to you of its architect? Reading the Iliad, does it not reveal its immortal

author? The Moses of Michael Angelo, does it not remind you of its unapproachable sculptor? The Transfiguration, does it not recall Raphael? The martyrdom of St. Gerolamo, Dominichino? In the same way all nature speaks to us of God and proclaims His existence.

"But it is not God, it is nature that shows itself," says atheism.

There are two ways of conceiving the existence of beings. Either they exist of themselves, or through others. In the former instance existence is *essential*, necessary; in the latter, it is *derived*. The former is called *essential*, the second *accidental* entity.

Now, either *all* entities are *accidental*, or there is one which is *essential*. In the former case the existence of nature would be an absurdity, for all entities would be the production of nothingness, whereas nothing produces nothing. But if all entities are *accidental* they have received their own entity from some other which is not *accidental:* for an *accidental* entity which might have given entity to itself is impossible; because it must at one and the same time both *have had* and *not* have had entity. Therefore, an *essential* entity exists; God exists.

"But," adds the atheist, "Matter is eternal." If you ask him for the proof of this, he will answer, "It is an axiom that does not lend itself to demonstration." What a beautiful axiom, indeed, that has against it two impossibilities—the mathematical and the physical.

A mathematical impossibility: Because that which is eternal must be immutable and knows no change; but, as matter is always changing, we must admit that it has had an infinite series of changes, which, if it be eternal, is impossible and absurd. A metaphysical impossibility:

Because it would be necessary that matter, owing to its not being *accidental*, should have all the proper attributes of *essential* entity. But these attributes are irreconcilable with all the proofs of experience of the inferiority of matter.

From its very beginning humanity has proposed these three questions: What am I? Whence do I come? Whither do I go?

To the first and last of these questions there is an answer; to the second, none. Humanity is grand, and has no end; but how did it begin?

To reascend to the first link in the chain of creation by the deduction of spontaneous generation is ridiculous; to pretend that matter, without either organization or intelligence, is able to produce this and that is to admit that an effect can surpass its cause, or indeed effect without cause. And ridiculous also is the recourse of the atheist to a pretended latent force in matter—a latent force that must have fashioned the world. But with this they give to matter the proprietorship of spirit; absurd consequence of other absurdities. Pascal said: "It is incomprehensible that God is not: that God is, is also incomprehensible, but *not absurd*."

If we examine the movement that obtains around us, the question rises spontaneously to the lips: Who has imparted such motion to matter?

In Nature there exists no inert mass; from the stars that revolve in the immensity of space, to the crystal that forms in the bowels of the earth; from the butterfly flitting from flower to flower, from the eagle poising on the wing, from the worm, to the soul of man, all is motion. But whence this movement? Is it derived, *accidental*; or is it *essential* to matter? Essential? Both physics and mathematics forbid, for this motion can be modified or suppressed. Furthermore, that

which is *essential* has also *essential* elements: But direction and velocity are *essential* elements of motion: Therefore, we must admit always the same velocity, the same direction. But, instead, the universe has passed through various phases, just *on account* of the difference of the motion.

There remains, then, only the "*accidental*" hypothesis: explained by Boethius as an immovable motor that gives everything its motion.

The order that shines forth in the heavens, that rules the firmament, is not dependent on man. How is it to be explained? Perhaps by fortuitous conditions, mere chance? But who can believe in chance, that is, in no rational cause? Clearly, the thought of order without rational cause, is repugnant.[1] Perhaps by natural laws? But what are these laws? They are the *expression* of intelligence but not intelligence itself; they are causes, but causes that presuppose an instrument.[2]

As it is natural to explain the alternate succession of day and night by the rotundity of the earth which gyrates round the sun, so, in order to explain the perfection and order which pervades all things, the idea of God is necessary.

In fact this order presents itself under two aspects; either as a system of laws, or as a system of means directed to a given end.

The universe, being intelligible, must be the work of an intelligence, and this presupposes a system of laws as a rational, and means as a providential element.

The positivist denies this intention, this end. For him the little bird that flies in space has not wings in order that it may fly, but it flies because it has wings. One thing and the other are con-

[1] To reason.—Ed.

[2] That presuppose an Agent, Legislator, God; an instrument, matter, Nature (including man).—Ed.

jointly true: the bird, in fact, flies because it has wings, but it has wings on purpose that it may fly. The motive precedes the fact, and, bound up in the *cause* of the fact, there is the intention and the end.

Behold all Nature; the lily that blossoms in spring, the grapes which ripen, and all the phenomena that unfold themselves, do they not demonstrate a Supreme Intelligence that directs everything to its end? The scientist, the philosopher, cannot save themselves from God. Without Him their books will burn you, but the majesty of God will come out triumphant and glorious.[1] Approach science, which, in faith, becomes sublime; approach the philosophy of science, and, in spite of your blasphemy, O atheists! it will form so many steps by which to reach the altar of God. Modern science aims at the convulsion and overthrow of everything; but with all their analyses, what have they proved against the existence of God?

A savant thought to find life in death, but was arrested before a corpse. "Here is some one!" said the illustrious scientist, anatomising the dead clay. And from the analysis of science the proof of the existence of God became more evident.

Sing, then, with confidence, my soul, the first article of our creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty;" exclaim with Newton, "I believe in the existence of God; with Linnæus, "I have seen God who passed, by His traces left on the sand;" and sing, with Galileo, a hymn to the Deity.

We have sought God in history and creation; let us seek Him within ourselves, descending into our very selves, as said Descartes, and consider our interior.

We all, even the atheist himself, bear within us the idea and love of the infinite. Whence comes this

[1] "We must live either under the empire of His love, or under" "that of His justice; either glorify His power by free obedience" "or glorify it by inevitable punishment." Manresa, p. 27, par. 6.—Ed.

idea? Either it has been placed in our soul, as the gold is hidden in the bowels of the earth:—and then whose hand has placed it there? or we find it there as the honey in the honeycomb: and then who has given the bee this delight in the infinite? Fenelon has answered for us: "It comes to me from God."

The love of the infinite, that promises us eternity and adoration, what is it? Man having been made in the similitude of the infinite, has then the infinite as his object; the heart looks for the increate, and knows that it has not been deceived. If reason can say—"I think, therefore, I exist;"[1] then the heart can exclaim—"My Lord, I love Thee; therefore Thou dost exist."

Another marvel is our conscience, that mysterious voice which gives us the idea of good and evil, and from which no man can escape. Who has established this tribunal? Not man, certainly, neither the family, nor society; because these are in opposition with it. It follows, therefore, that it comes from some other and higher source—from God. We seek in vain a moral law apart from God; the abstract idea of duty is not sufficient; no instinct of happiness is explicable without God. Without Him all is absurd, impossible;—because God is the origin of right and duty; because God exists and surrounds us on every side, and we cannot escape Him either in history, in the world, in science, or in our heart.

He who says he does not believe in God is not sincere; and I hope such men, at the death-bed of some dear friend, will refind their faith and do homage to God. I hope that at least, at the end of their life, they will believe in Him, will profess and adore Him. This is the hope that consoles me, and I trust that, through my prayers and your own, it may not be a vain one.

1 Since, in order that I may think, I must first exist, therefore, when I say "I think," I also *imply*, "I exist."—Ed.

III.

WHO GOD IS.

God exists. Here is a truth imposed by reason, even in the absence of faith; a truth that shines forth in the good order and harmony that reigns in the work of creation; a truth resplendent in the history of the world, and to the demonstration of which Seneca, Cicero, Aristotle, and all the greatest intelligences of antiquity applied themselves.

An isolated voice, a discordant note in the universal harmony, has made itself heard in the course of ages, affirming that God does not exist, that matter alone regulates the universal laws; but this voice has found no answering echo, and against it the conscience of mankind revolts. He who says that God cannot exist raises himself against all, and over all, and tells them they are all wrong. "He who has the courage to deny the action of the Divinity in the universe is mad," said Aristotle; and a French philosopher has added; "One must be a maniac to have the courage to be impious."

But who is this God? What is God? This question took St. Thomas to his masters, and, after having received an explanation from them, he used to insist again and again: "But who is God? What is God?"

The same question is put to every human soul, and it is impatient of an answer. But who will give us an acceptable one? Listen, brethren, and you shall see.

Who is God? To this problem two solutions, each diametrically opposed to each other, present themselves: that of philosophy, and that of religion.

Philosophy, not having a basis, gives a false solution; religion, on the other hand, has found a convincing and consoling one.

In the beginning every school of philosophy was based on theology. It was the golden age, the age refulgent with celestial splendour.

But over this brightness there swept the reflex of darkness, and men, abandoning themselves to perverse instincts, gave themselves up as slaves to human Reason alone; and thence was born that philosophy which, abandoned to itself, has not been able, through all its many false systems, to do more than merely preserve some portions of primitive truth, and, driven to itself form an idea of the Supreme Being, yet, not being willing to admit revelation, proclaims Destiny and denies God.

Then, perceiving that the world is in need of a Supreme Being, it invokes Polythiesm and favours every sort of idolatry.

Thus are verities enveloped in darkness, everything is subordinated to sensual enjoyment, and man becomes the slave of falsehood and sin.

So one precipitates himself into paganism. In his eyes, everything in the world is Matter, the order of the universe is nothing but the result of a spontaneous and blind Natural Force, and he elevates Destiny to the honours of the altar. Look at the Oriental philosophy. The starting-

point is ever the germ of revelation. But in it are born dualism, metempsychosis, and pantheism. In Greece, under the form of Platonism, it falls into scepticism, becoming the focus of every speculative and practical error, generating a frightful confusion and combatting truth which is life's necessity. In the face of such philosophies, behold that of Alexandria, which at first presented itself as a reaction against scepticism. But, daughter of a pagan idea, and originating at the moment in which Christianity was establishing itself in the world, it remained pagan, accumulating error upon error, and combatting Christ and the Church, not with the arms of science, but with malignant insinuation and impudent calumnies. Moribund, it loses itself in a mass of hypotheses, and falls back again into the errors of pantheism and fetishism.

And what does modern philosophy give us? Nothing but the repetition of a bygone school, the repetition of the free-thinkers of earlier days. Modern philosophy places Rationalism before everything, promising the happiness of human Progress, and, accepting chaos even in the midst of the nineteenth century, denies God as a word devoid of sense, and that ought to be erased.

Are not these the theories that certain reviews proclaim, certain books, certain journals that pass through the hands of your dear friends, and are received all too easily at your hearths? Are not these the very theories that certain philosophers paid with the money of the State explain to you? They proclaim that it is not God Who has created man, but man who has invented God; so that as God exists only in the mind of man, man adores himself.

Behold the answer that philosophy gives to the question: Who is God? See how, after nineteen

centuries of Christianity, she disguises the problem, confounds the terms, ignores the solution.

What, on the other hand, does religion say? When speaking of God she is always sublime, always glitters with the most brilliant light that both ravishes the profoundest genius in contemplation, and, because she speaks with all the simplicity of the maternal lips, penetrates also the intelligence of the child.

To the question, Who is God? religion answers clearly, sublimely, simply; and it replies in the Catechism, the Creed, the Bible.

Let us take the Catechism. Pure and innocent child, you who have learnt the Catechism on your mother's knee, come and tell me, Who is God?

The child does not hesitate, does not confound himself, but, smiling, answers: "God is an infinitely pure and perfect Spirit, who has created heaven and earth, and is the Lord and Master of everything." Sublime answer, profound philosophy.

Did you follow? God, then, is a pure Spirit. Here is vanquished the gross error of pantheism, which confounds God with everything. God is infinitely perfect. Here is the confutation of the monstrous error that God is evil. God has created heaven and earth. Here is given the lie to positivism, which regards the universe as a continual Evolution. God is the Master of everything. Here it is proved that everything in the world depends on God, that mankind are His servants, that He keeps His eye fixed on them to reward or punish according to their actions. This conception of God, at once so simple and clear, penetrates the intelligence of the child, and becomes his precious patrimony, light for his mind, the repose of his heart. He realizes that God is his Father and Master, Who watches over him. Thus he

grows in truth, in virtue, is a good child, and becomes useful to himself and to his country.

This is the answer of the Catechism.—Hear now the teaching of the Creed, the true profession of the faith, which also answers in clear, precise, and irrefutable words. It is from the mouth of infancy that we shall again hear the accent of truth. Come here, my child, raise your eyes to heaven, and recite the symbol of the faith: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." Here, in a few words, is the answer to philosophic incredulity. The Church in these words has affirmed the essence of God, which is unity; the attribute of God, which is omnipotence; the work of God, which is the creation of heaven and earth. This conception was given by God, through Moses, to the Hebrews. Open that ancient book, the Bible, and in the first verse you will find, *In principio Deus creavit Cœlum et Terram* (Gen. i. 1)

But we will leave here the Catechism and the Creed, and raise ourselves ever nearer to God, and ask Him Who is our Father, and Who will tell us for Himself Who He is. And this is what He will answer us: "*Ego sum qui sum*"—"I am who I am" (Exodus iii. 14).

How sublime is this definition! How it fills up the mind with light and admiration! The *Principium* of Talete, the *Beautiful* of Plato, the *Great all* of Pythagoras are nothing at all in comparison with this affirmation, "*Ego sum.*"

Yes, my God, Thou art; though Thou art not like man who comes and goes, nor like the profundity of the heavens, nor like the hierarchy of the angels, but Thou art the necessary and *essential* Supreme Being, the Beginning of existence, the Creator of everything, the Source of every perfection.

Let us analyse this definition more fully.

God is not a mere conception, but a living reality, in which is found every perfection, the shadows only of which one admires in creatures. And who would dare to say that while the personality of the creature is a stupendous perfection, the Creator's must be wanting? The personality of God, therefore, is conformable to the infinite.

In God is omnipotence. With Him, "all things are possible,"[1] with the exception of absurdity. He is independent of all, is Lord of lords, King of kings. He has an infinite omnipotence, inexhaustible, that nothing can resist. A sign from Him is quite enough; the world comes out of nothing, the stars derive their light and motion, the seas roll up their waters, life springs into being everywhere in the active operation of nature.

In God there is immensity. As He is infinite and most simple, He is present everywhere. He is truth, wisdom, limited neither by time nor space; "in Him we move, and we are" (Acts xvii. 28).

In God is all science. He possesses it in all the fulness of wisdom. He is the *veggente*, as say the holy books, Who can acquire nothing, lose nothing, Who is ignorant of nothing, Who doubts nothing, for Whom the past, the present, the future, are an infallible centre, around which converges all creation.

In God is justice. He is a most just distributor of His graces. He rewards the good, and punishes the bad.

In God is sanctity, through which He loves His creatures, through which His gifts are holy, and through which He hates evil and sin.

In God is beauty. Everything beautiful in creatures, the harmony of heaven and earth, all comes to us from Him. By this divine beauty,

[1] St. Mat. xix. 26.

than which it is impossible to conceive anything more beautiful, more splendid, Raphael was inspired when delineating his sweetest faces. By this beauty were inspired the sublime works of Mozart and Rossini. Beside of this beauty neither the immensity nor the serenity of the starry heavens has any comparison. Of this beauty Plato used to dream and speak with ecstasy; this beauty St. Augustine regretted having known too late

In God there is goodness and mercy. God is good in Himself; loads His creatures with benefits, and desires to propagate His beneficence. I cannot, brethren, remember all the mysteries of the charity of God, all the mysteries of His love and of His mercy.

In God, in a word, are all possible perfections, but without limit, infinite in His own Being.

To recapitulate the divine attributes I will recall what St. Bonaventura and St. Augustine said: "God is Himself incomprehensible, but comprehends everything; invisible, yet sees everything; inaccessible, yet pervades everything; possesses all things, yet neither takes nor loses anything. I tell you little, but I tell you the truth, and I tell you what it is."

God is great, immense, good; He is in all time, in all His works, in everything.

If I add every perfection of the celestial hierarchy, if I gather together all the strength of human energy, all this is nothing in comparison with the goodness, the greatness, the power, the justice, the mercy, the charity, the light, the truth, the happiness, and the eternity of God. I tell you little, but I tell you the truth, and I tell you what it is.

All the energy of the physical and spiritual worlds, the sum of all science and intelligence, the wisdom of all the wise, the genius of all artists,

moreover, all the virtues and pulsations of generous hearts, and every perfection possible to be conceived, are not so much as a grain of sand in comparison with God.

We must, therefore, conclude with Plato and Fènèlon, and must say:—*He is*;—and this is all that is possible to a finite word, for it is impossible to express His attributes infinitely.

Here is the God Who teaches us our religion. God being known in this way, light is made, chaos is dispelled, and our reason has a starting-point, a goal, and a secure way between the two that will never fail. Religion becomes beautiful, necessary to unite men to God. Political and civil society are seen to be derived from a supernatural order; government respects the liberties and rights of the governed, and these respect the rights of authority derived from God. All things harmonize and unite together for the good of mankind. History gathers up all events in order, and recognizes in everything the providential action of God. Guided by this light, men learn to perceive in the evolution of empires, and in the great events of history, the will of God, Who directs them by ways known to Himself alone, for the regeneration of mankind. To poetry, to the fine arts, vast fields are laid open; eloquence bursts forth; creation, which without God is but a corpse, with God flourishes, is animated, and exults.

Music, inspired by God, becomes the celestial expression of the dearest recollections of our souls. The picture takes life, architecture raises stupendous structures, and the industries sing the praises of God, because they have for their instruments matter which is the work of His hands.

Everything in the world is raised and ennobled by God. But what would the world be without God? You shall see, brethren.

Without God everything darkens and dies. History, science, man, people, world, what do they become?

History is nothing but a series of events, without reason which justifies them, without cause, without aim; a frightful chaos. Science, when it would act without God, when it rejects revelation, falls into scepticism. I do not despise the powers of scientists, but without revelation to what do they attain? They describe phenomena and exterior facts wonderfully, but of their origin, of the laws that govern them, they know nothing. Of a perfect harmonic whole they make a mosaic—active, if you will, but without unity, and that forces a contradiction on you.

Without God, what does man become? I know not whence he comes, whither he goes, what is his destiny, his future; he gropes in the dark, beating, without hope, on the rocks of life, desperate, inconsolable. And when overtaken by misfortune what does he do? Either he turns against it desperately, or, without consolation crushes himself by his own weight. On his death-bed, in the presence of father, mother, and son, even at the moment of death, he feels not the comfort of God. Sad is the condition of him who believes not; for it is to live without comfort, to die without hope. Without God there is nothing in the next life; no longer a Supreme Judge to distinguish the good from the bad, to reward or punish. Virtue and vice, crime and sacrifice, will have the same reward. Without God, social organization would totter under the blows of its own iniquity.

To what would the people come without God? In the event of a universal negation of God, instead of order and harmony, the world would be a hell. No longer principles of unity, of fraternity, of authority. Without God, no more unity of origin.

Everything would be an isolated product of the force of fatality. God being excluded from society, brotherly love would cease, men would fight one with the other, and, sooner or later, would come to social and fratricidal war.

Instead of the pacific division of wealth, violent divisions and ferocious cupidity, an abiding tragedy, vast and frightful. Liberty and equality would be impossible without God. This is liberty, they will tell you, when they shall have bound you in chains; this is fraternity, they will say, when they shall have plunged the knife into your heart; this is equality, leering in your face they will aver, when they shall have brutalized and reduced you to servitude.

Instead of a calm and serene horizon we should have a lowering one, banked with threatening clouds, and a leaden sky that would annihilate us under the burthen of an inexorable destiny.

IV.

THE TRUE CONCEPTION OF MAN.

God exists. This primary truth forces itself on the reason apart from faith. But after the problem of the existence of God, there is that which has for its object the study of man.

What is man? The mystery in which this problem is involved will never be unravelled by turning to the legends of the poets, or to science, for an answer, for, though the scientist knows our physiological phenomena, he will never rise to the knowledge of the origin and cause of these phenomena.

Useless are the supreme efforts made to wrest from the forehead of man his crown as king of creation; they have proved vain attempts. Their originators have fallen into evolutionism and positivism, and below all there is epicureanism, which tends to snatch the crown from the heads of both God and man at the same time.

Vain attempts, I repeat! God is the immortal King of ages, Who sees all things round Him change, but Who Himself knows no change; Who sees the impious pass as in an instant while He Himself remains—without beginning, without end.

What is man? What shall we think of him? What is his place among all the vast hierarchy of creation?

The atheistic school answers:—*Man is an organism in motion.* For this the soul is a useless hypothesis; nor has the anatomist's knife ever succeeded in establishing the presence of the soul. About every other phenomenon science gives a mathematical explanation; but of the existence of the soul she is unable to give any at all. To-day, when science has become great, it has been established as a principle not to accept anything but facts attested by experience.

Atheists say:—How in the world would you that teaching should take the soul into consideration when every vital phenomenon can be explained without this vain supposition? You see, they say, a motor; it is an inert force and, therefore, useless; but the impulse of another extraneous physical force is enough that it may change its position, may enter upon action, and be one of the most powerful factors in the development of industry. You see how in nature every energy is transformed by successive changes; coal is converted into heat, heat into motion, motion into work.

And, if we pass on to observe the living mechanism, we shall always see, says the modern positivist, something analogous; food is converted into heat, this heat generates motion, from which come all the phases of life and even of thought, for the soul, according to Renan, is nothing else but the result of the living, active organism.

The soul, said Littrè, is the product of the sensibility of the brain; but in death he found out that the soul was a reality, and repenting, entrusted it to God. Socrates at the moment of drinking the hemlock, found himself face to face with this same question, put to him by one of his interlocutors: "Is not the soul a harmony resulting from corporeal forces, as sound is diffused in the air by the vibrations of the lyre?" But Socrates

answered with peremptory reasons, disdaining the vain sophism.

You, materialists, you wish to admit nothing but *facts*. Well, adhering to this method, let us make an examination of *facts*, considering them, however, without neglecting the chief ones, and, above all, without omitting to study them as a whole.

What is man? The man whom you love or detest, how do you know him? I do not speak to you of that knowledge which refers to the external parts of anyone, but of that which shows itself in sympathy and antipathy, of that knowledge that obtains in ordinary language. In order that you may know me and I you, it is necessary that we manifest our tendencies, opinions, thoughts, sentiments, wishes.

Through this manifestation *alone* can we say that we know the man. There is, in the man who is seen, another who is not seen. The person, the vices or virtues of whom repel or attract us, is hidden in the shell, which alone is visible.

Even if I possessed that valuable quality that they called "second sight," and knew how to distinguish with my eye, and follow with my look, the nerve that extends when a thought perturbs it, or its tremors when moved by the will, should I, perchance, find myself nearer to the desired complete knowledge of the man? And should I, possibly, know were a friend disposed to help me, or an enemy preparing to deceive me? But greater still, and too great, is the distance that I should have to traverse. It is but the instrument that you see, while I seek instead the agent; it is the hand that you contemplate, while I consider the mind that moves it. You have a fine way of confusing facts. There is an enormous distance betwen the two orders of phenomena that

work, some being the servants of the body, others of the sovereign soul. Teach the physical and physiological sciences to our poor youth if you like, but do not violate nature in order to deny psychology. If truth remain unknown, if the soul fly at your examination, to deny it because you cannot explain it is to make negation but a shield of impotence.

You are staggered at not finding the soul in your anatomical researches, at the point of your knife, in a drop of blood, in a lobe of the brain. Your being thus stupified pleases me; as, on the day that you found it where you seek it, I could no longer believe in it. He who does not understand this first beginning of common sense deceives himself. May God deliver you, brethren, from those who, to tend the body, refuse to believe in the soul; for they will not be able to take account of your moral dispositions, which themselves largely influence bodily health. God preserve you, above all, from those systematic chloroformists *(addormentator)* who hazard the souls of others, unprepared for their terrible passage. But, O materialist doctors, if you do not believe, yet your client does; and, by acting as you do, you betray confidence and violate the most precious and incontrovertible right, that of religious liberty.

Now, by denying this dualism which forms our grandeur, our glory, the dignity of human nature, upon what foundation do they establish themselves? Their journals, their books, their reviews tell you. They do not admit the soul because they do not understand the existence of a spiritual essence. Yet, if they must admit only what they understand, what will they admit.

But, they add, the soul has not been *felt*. This, however, is but a miserable begging of the ques-

tion. Nothing can be felt unless it be material. We have looked for, they say, but not found the soul. But, if you please, where have you sought it? In the anatomist's room, in a dried-up corpse. You have done like one who, holding in his hand the cage, looks in it for the little bird that an instant before has taken flight; you have done as those who, owing a visit, wait for the day and the hour when you are not at home to make it.

It is not thus that you must seek the soul. Search for it in the works of the artist, who transfers the spark of genius to his canvas or marble; seek it near the musician, whose sweet melodies transport and move you; among the poor who suffer; and, when you cannot find it in others, seek it within your own self, and you will find it.

One day the Abbé de l'Epée called up one of the inmates *(recoverati)* of his Institute, whipped him, and sent him away; and the child began to cry. Then he called up another, and gave him a letter; and this one also, after having read it, burst into tears. Then the Abbé asked the others why the former should cry; and they all answered, "Because he has been beaten." To the question, why should the second have cried, no one knew what to answer. And he said, "Because he also has been beaten, not on the body, but in the soul; the letter he read announced the death of his mother." In this way the Abbé made the children understand how, besides the body, there exists also a soul, which, indeed, may suffer when the body has not been touched.

You who deny it, do you really wish to find the soul? Recollect yourselves, banish every false conception, and you will find it.

When you say: "*I feel*," do you not say, in effect, "*I exist?*" And are not your forms, "*I*

think," "*I will*," each synonymous with "*I exist?*" And does not this demonstrate that there is within you an *I* who feels, thinks, and wills? And this language, who holds it? It is the soul which, even in spite of the body, speaks thus; the soul which, although united to the body, yet remains ever profoundly distinct.

Do you wish to prove it? In every circumstance of your life do you not always say *I?* Was it not *I* in childhood, when your imagination used to flit as a butterfly from flower to flower? Was it not *I* in youth, when you travailed in grief and passion? Is it not *I* in mature age, when you have experienced the first disillusions? Is it not *I* in old age, when remorse shall fall on us for our past faults? It is the *I*, always the *I*, who pursues the path of change; matter, on the other hand, continues its own march. There is, therefore, something permanent within us that is not matter. The consciousness of our identity is a peremptory proof against the negation of the soul. Note how matter continually changes in the same individual; every day we lose something of that physical being, which we sustain by aliments, so that after eight years both flesh and bones are wholly changed in us. But, this being so, how is it that we remember what we learned eight years ago? It is because there is within us something which sees the current of our lives flow on, which something is not matter. Moreover, even in its very operation, it reveals the soul. The soul *thinks*, and all its manifestations are essentially *simple*. No unbeliever can affirm that he has a kilogram of desire, five grains of will, the square or the cube of his perception. Neither can this essentially simple product be a result of any concrete whatsoever. The materialist objects: "but when the brain is perturbed the thought also is perturbed; when

phosphorus is lacking to the brain it lacks thought also." What shall we reply? Simply this: You confuse the conditions that influence phenomena with the cause that produces them. The watch *indicates* the time, but is not the cause of the time. Listen to those lovely sounds to which the violinist gives birth on his instrument; but a string snaps and the melody is at an end. Was it, then, the string that inspired him? If thoughts were the mere products of physical movement we should never be able to change them, and once fallen into error, should be compelled to persist in it. And then, as an indisputable proof that thought is not the product of the brain, we have the fact that it does not always originate from it. Brutes have brain, but not ideas, and all their sensations are material. Above all, they lack proportion between matter and thought; whereas the soul thinks and reasons even when the body decays. Sophocles composed the most beautiful of his tragedies at ninety years of age; Malebranche at eighty years old was wonderfully conspicuous for vivacity of mind; Fabius Maximus at the same age saved the Republic; Humboldt in extreme old age dictated the work which made his name immortal. The brain, in man, is perception at the service of the understanding — not the author of thought.

Yet the materialist does not give in, but grounds himself on a modern discovery. The transfusion of oxygenized blood has been practised on certain animals, and physiological phenomena have been seen to appear and disappear. Therefore, he says, the understanding comes from the blood and the brain. But does this argument hold good? Take away a wheel from the watch and it will stop. Put the wheel back again, but out of place, and the watch will fail to indicate the hour; put it

back once more into its proper place, and the watch will again indicate the correct time. Why? Because the wheel is the *means* by which the spring works; but it would be absurd to assert that the *cause* which divides time into hours resides either in the *form* or the *matter* of the wheel.

The materialist insists on saying: "Whatever thought may be, it is always the product of matter, the result of its force." Well let us admit it for the moment. Where shall this thought, which we want to attribute to matter, reside? In every molecule? in one molecule alone? or in the whole mass? If it be distributed entire in each molecule, then my thought would be multiplied. If it reside in only one molecule, is the molecule divisible or indivisible? If divisible, there remains the first objection, viz., that my thought might be multiplied; but, if the molecule be indivisible, to wit, *simple*, we cannot call it matter. If, lastly thought reside in the mass, then it becomes a lying thought, for the *principle* of thought is divided. Moreover, the soul not only thinks, but it also *judges* of what is good or bad, of what is suitable or unsuitable. Now, a principle that *compares* and *judges* cannot be material, but must be spiritual.

More than that, however, the soul, besides thinking and judging, *creates*. It creates general and abstract ideas which have no real existence in nature, and that cannot therefore be originated by matter. If this were the principle of my intelligence, I should have but particular ideas, determined, but never abstract and general ideas.

And more than that, again, the soul *wills*. This is the most beautiful gift that God has given to His creatures—liberty! that liberty for which every tongue has a name, in which every conscience has a guide.

I will; herein is a spontaneous expression of activity, a sense of *free*-will in the bondage of matter. Hence man's moral responsibility rendering him answerable in all his criminal aberrations, and meritorious in the glory of his virtue.[1]

But the soul also *commands*. It commands the body as though it were distinct. Behold—a man has received a blow, he resents it, the blood flies to his face, his arm is raised, his hand is on the point of striking; but all at once his arm is arrested, his hand falls down again, his anger is appeased. Why? Because the soul has commanded the body, and the body has obeyed; the man has pardoned.

Who gave courage to our martyrs, loaded with chains, harassed in every manner, tortured in every kind of way? Who made them smile amidst their torments and sing the glad song of victory? It was the soul that knew and felt itself free, though in the prison house of the body.

Which of us has not found himself in one of those terrible moments in which life seems a burthen, and has not suddenly recovered himself when the soul has asserted her supremacy, crying out to the body: "Recover yourself, do you not hear your Master who commands you?" Who has not at least once known this dominion of the soul over the body? I pity him who has not known it, and understand how *he* can be a materialist; but he who, on the other hand, *has* known it, must have known moreover a force that cannot be weighed in the balance, a force that is not physical; a force that we call *soul*.

[1] God's "goodness towards men is so great that He regards as their merits the very gifts which He Himself bestows upon them." Counc. Trent. Sess. vi. cap. xviii. "God crowns His own grace when He crowns our merits." St. Aug. Vide "Cath. Belief," x. 53.—Ed.

But let us turn to Religion, and suffer her to dissipate our last doubts.

To the question: Who is man? Religion opens wide her books and bids us read. And we read: God said: "*Let us make man to our image and likeness; and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth*" (Gen. i. 26).

Therefore, men are the children of the earth, but they govern it. And if man is the king of the earth, it is because he has a different element in him—an element which is not in the earth, and this element is spirit. "*And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul*" (Gen. ii 7), we read again in the books of Religion. God, therefore, has given *soul* to man, who thus consists of the two elements of soul and body; and if, in the latter, he has the most perfect organism, in his soul he resembles the Angels. In this way he unites the potentiality of both matter with its beauty and spirit with all its splendour.

In this living light which Christian doctrine presents to us, the study of man becomes engaging and sublime.

Man made to the image and likeness of God, enters into communication with Him, becomes invested with authority in His name, and in it commands and possesses. No longer alone on the earth, he has with him the family, thence civil and political society, and thence rights, duties, and laws.

Man made to the image and likeness of God, was created to know the truth, to love the good and to practise virtue.

Man made to the image and likeness of God, is the friend of God, called to love and enjoy Him.

Man is a sublime, but poor and fallen *entity* that, labouring under grand illusions, sighs for his own native land. Christianity alone can make him a hero, a martyr, a saint.

Take away Christianity, and each and every dignity and greatness disappears, vanishes religion, morality, society, everything

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Take away Christianity, take away the soul, and in its stead bursts forth materialism; every greatness disappears, and, with this, religion, morality, and society.

Vanishes religion; because, without the soul, it would be useless; laws would be valueless, because without sanction; they would even be tyranny, for man, says materialism, can only act from necessity. That is to say, materialism is the radical destruction of every religion.

Vanishes morality; for, without the soul, what would rights and duties be? Every effort would be made to procure the greatest pleasure, while every means would be lawful; and the consequences can be easily imagined. Neither is this an exaggeration. True, materialists also speak of rights and duties, of moral responsibility, of good and evil. But is this language serious, honest? They speak of liberty, and in the same breath want to convince me that I am the slave of matter; they speak of responsibility, yet teach simultaneously that everything proceeds from the blind forces of passion, and that after death there is nothing. That is the same as to talk of liberty to a falling millstone, to a hurricane that is let loose, to an earthquake that overthrows the city. It is the same as to speak of moderation to a wild beast of the forest, of respect of life to the plants that poison us.

This, then, is the sign of slavery under the rod of fatalism, where morality is that of pleasure, of oppression of the weakest, where morality is that of the tiger who devours his prey, where duty consists in coveting every pleasure, where the polity is nought but an alternate succession of cynical combinations. The prince of such a kingdom would be a very Domitian, who could wash his hands in the tears and blood of his people.

Vanishes society; with materialism any enormity whatsoever is justified, every iniquity is logical, every passion without restraint, every law a violence, every act of justice a tyranny.

Atheism thought it had pronounced the final word for the glorification of man in withdrawing him from that God Whom it denies. Materialists, the children of atheists, complete the work; they make man his own master, break every human bond, destroy society. Materialistic society resembles a handful of savages, the society of very tigers, which, however, do not devour each other. With materialism, family ties no longer exist; desperate attempts against honour, against liberty, and against life, increase; the passion for gold absorbs everyone; armed anarchy reigns as against order; and servility dominates everyone. The dismal uproar of brute force bursts forth from the flux and reflux of matter, and a bloody hand seems to trace the terrible words that Dante saw written over the gates of Hell:

> "Lasciate ogni speranza o voi che entrate"—
> (Leave every hope behind, O ye who enter.)

What can be said? What can be done? To the doctrine of materialism, but not to the unfortunates who hold it, we must answer with the famous word of Lacordaire: "Down, canaille of

doctrine; you will not be able to persuade me that the genius of Michael Angelo and of Raphael were but the products of organic matter. Give place, for, were you to succeed in persuading me, you would render virtue, glory, liberty, impossible." To the follower of these doctrines, one must answer with Napoleon I.: "Down, I do not wish to have anything to do with mud; I do not wish to have anything in common with him who would persuade me that I am a brute beast, for he is one himself."

Of him who teaches such doctrine one must demand what end, what interest he has; and he will not be able to answer.

But, if all this were not enough, we should have to repeat what a rich young Englishman did, where the reasoning of discussion after discussion ended very often in the theory of evolutionism. One evening, while conversation was very animated, he withdrew a curtain, behind which he had placed an orang-outang,[1] richly dressed, and turning to those present, said:—"Gentlemen, if there be anyone among you who will recognize this animal as an ancestor, let him shake hands with it. But I do not myself wish to know anything about it."

Orang-outang, lit., man of the woods, but used here to signify an *ape*, which in size and form closely resembles the Malay.

V.

THE SOUL IN SCIENCE AND ART.

Neither matter, nor any other created thing, can give us an account of any intellectual or moral faculty whatsoever that man has. We must not allow ourselves to be carried away by the arguments of materialists, who never shrink from the idea of likening us to the brutes, but whose propositions, inasmuch as they are disproved by science, are simply ridiculous.

In fact, if we had to believe materialists, man would have for ancestors some apes, which, gradually rejecting their marks of savagedom, would have humanized their rude visages, developed their crania to make themselves sublime, and have acquired the beautiful type of Caucasian race, in which there shines the fascination of love and the fire of liberty.

This, brethren, is the proposition of the materialist as to the origin of man; a proposition which is based on an entirely inadequate cause, and which is antagonistic to common sense. To consult him, is, indeed, precisely on a par with the selection of a blind man to judge of the worth of a picture.

But, since the materialist seduces youth under the cover of "science," I may be allowed to demonstrate that materialism has neither science, nor art, nor virtue; and for this reason, that it is the

soul that *creates* science, and through science *dominates* matter; it is the *soul* that *creates* art, by which it *transforms* matter; it is the *soul* that *creates* virtue, by which it *triumphs* over the very opposition itself of matter.

This is my theme, and arduous enough it is; but I confide, brethren, in the goodness of God and your indulgence.

Examine your soul. What do you find in it? Three instincts or tendencies, those of Truth, Beauty, Goodness. And it is these tendencies which, developing in their action, produce the creations of the soul, which are, Science, Art, Virtue. Thus is demonstrated that our soul must be a *spiritual* entity.

Materialists say: *We have no soul, and there is only the physical world.*

If they speak thus sincerely, they are themselves deceived. I remember reading of a blind sculptor who, feeling his model with his hand, succeeded in reproducing its form on the marble, and made a not despicable work. But if, instead of a chisel, he had used the brush, what would have been the result? If, to judge of the value of a picture, one were, as I said, to consult a blind man, would you not say it was absent-mindedness? And it is precisely in this forgetfulness that materialists run when they cite science to prove that the soul has no existence; for science is, *for them*, the knowledge of only the *material* world. But how do we acquire this knowledge? By the use of the senses and the means devised to facilitate their use. By means of his "science" the materialist sees, touches, and anatomizes everything material, but as to that which is incorporate,

which is spiritual, which is not matter, this "science" of his is as a blind man.

It would, indeed, be ridiculous to use the knife, the microscope, the measure, the balance, chemical analysis, and the rest, to find the soul; and you would certainly laugh at the scientist who should do so.

But true wisdom is a creation of the soul, by means of which she becomes the mistress of matter.

Science tends to generalization, it seeks in things the element of permanency, the type that gathers particulars around itself, the common essence that constitutes their species.

There is, therefore, no science without the two elements of *Particularity*, which is found in nature, and of *Generalization*, which is the work of the soul.

It is manifest that Particularity is unstable, multiform; for it is impossible to find two entities that shall be identical under every aspect. And if, indeed, they were to be found, they would but constitute a unique accident. Science in Particularity, then, cannot hold good, because deprived of the first indispensable character of real science, which is *stability*. "*There is no science in Particularity*," said Aristotle, and with him the Scholastics and Plato. Science aspires to *immutability*, to the *universal!* In a word, it aspires to *generalization*.

In order that science may fructify, it is necessary that it attain to *generality*. Now, the idea of *generality* is certainly different to that of *particularity*, with which it has nothing in common. If general ideas were material, one could represent them by material figures, but, as one cannot do so, they are not material.

And now, as ideas are conceived *in* the soul, and

by the soul, if they are not material, then neither is the soul material.

Observe a *sphere*. It is a material figure. Here are two elements. The soul is the subject which knows, while the sphere is the object known. If the soul, like the sphere, were material, it would take cognizance of the *given* sphere, but would never grasp the ideal and scientific conception of *every* sphere. An idea, therefore, is a spiritual, not a material thing, and, by consequence, the soul also is a spiritual thing.

All the sciences are composed of spiritual ideas. But these ideas are logical. Therefore, there is no science without logic. And logical concepts are *general* concepts, abstract and immutable, subject neither to time nor space.

Let us take, as an example, the principle: *Every effect has an adequate cause.*

How is it possible to arrive at the conclusion that *every effect has a proportionate cause*, if it be simply absurd to expect to be able to investigate *all* effects, and if, notwithstanding howsoever many may have been examined, we cannot affirm that we have examined *all?* Yet it is impossible to explain their causes by phenomena perceptible to the senses. It is not, therefore, from experience that reason deduces *general* concepts. These must be found in reason itself, for their truth is imposed on it by a comparatively very limited experience.

But the materialist, liege to his own system, is incapable of doing anything but put one after another the results of his observations. Should he wish to treat of these *particulars*, and deduce *general* consequences from them, he contradicts himself. Thus, he falls into two errors: into one by believing in nothing but experience; and into another by the contradiction of drawing con-

clusions of *general* laws from particular facts, while at the same time denying the credibility of aught save experience—which he makes no pretence of being universal.

To be a materialist is to make one's self ridiculous, it is merely to take up with a party.

All science, therefore, originates from a spiritual cause; and, moreover, as I accentuated above, the natural sciences overcome matter. It is with this object that, by means of science, the soul investigates the general laws of matter, and by them reigns over creation.

Let us now pass on to the other proof, that of art.

What is Art? What is its essence?

The essence of art is to represent matter by means of ideas. Art, as all are agreed, consists mainly in representing the *Beautiful* in the most splendid manner. But how is the genius of the artist enabled to conceive the Beautiful? "The *Beautiful*," says Plato, "is the splendour of *Truth;* it is Truth itself invested with such forms as not only to reveal it to the intelligence, but to make it also, as it were, the property of the heart." Well, it is in this way that it introduces itself into the mind of man, awakens in his breast that mysterious fluttering in the ecstatic gaze of mute contemplation, in the enthusiasm of an idea purely spiritual.

The principles of Beauty and of Truth are identical, and comprise harmony, splendour, proportion.

Let us raise ourselves from matter to spiritual ideality, and aspire to the eternal original that cannot be seen by mortal eye, that the soul seeks and sees through and through in its aspiring enthusiasm, to that ideal that has its principle in the very existence of God.

"Ideal? But look," say the materialists, "you confound a chimera with reality."

No; a thousand times no. The Ideal is not a chimera. Ask your soul: Has it not a tendency to conceive and express the ideal?

Observe a beautiful object that commands your admiration. Do you not find yourself conceiving something still more beautiful, still more admirable? Is it not granted you in this way to transport yourself to a height always measureless and sublime?

Thus are created the laws which regulate the more lofty delights.

The instinct of true genius is a creative power that gleams in the fire of poetry, in the harmony of music, and in the perfection of the fine arts. Indeed, he cannot be called a true artist who is not carried away, as it were, to raise the ideal above the material, soaring to splendid visions and fathoming original ideality. Herein is the essence of true genius, that it transports itself to the sublime regions of the ideal. The critic, indeed, makes the analysis and judges; but genius alone conceives and creates.

Here is the ideal, the law of every art.

And the artist, transported, as a fervent lover of art, bounds from nature to giddy ideal heights; mounts from summit to summit, rises from heaven to heaven, from splendour to splendour, endeavouring not only to contemplate, but to grasp and retain some flash of those beauteous glimpses, some ray of that luminous glory.

And after this ecstacy, after these captivating allurements, the soul of the enthusiast, of the ecstatic, is flooded with inspirations. Then, with burning gaze, he contemplates matter, and creates with feverish hand.

Does matter rebel? The artist abates not his

efforts, but works, and touches, and retouches, till under his brush the canvas bursts into life, or the marble throbs beneath his life-giving chisel.

Now, all unexpectedly, there is presented to our view the "Transfiguration," living canvas of Raphael; or, the sometime shapeless block of marble, the glorious "Moses" of Michael Angelo. Look, brethren, at the life, the beauty, the brightness of these creations. It is thus that man imitates God, and like Him becomes, as it were, a creator, and, as the fruit of his genius, realises ideal conceptions by his art work.

And now, brethren, let us consider the artist after having achieved even his chief work.

While he was creating, flashes of light shone all vivid in his face, the fire of inspiration lighted up his countenance.

But now see his face veiled with sadness, and his eyes suffused with tears. Look how Michael Angelo flings away the chisel, Sanzio the brush, while Virgil would burn the Æneid, and Tasso contemns the Jerusalem set Free. And why? Ah! because what they had contemplated in the sublime conceptions of their genius was infinitely more beautiful, more glorious, more perfect than what they actually achieved.

Now, materialists, tell me, where shall we find the origin of universal Beauty, where the laws of taste and the inspirations of the artist? In which part of creation do they reside? And the materialist answers: "In the soul of the artist"! Thus they contradict themselves, for this answer implies that the soul is purely *im*-material.

To conclude: If the origin and laws of beauty are spiritual, then the soul that understands and entertains them is truly excellent and immaterial.

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And now let us proceed to consider the *mission* of Art.

What is its mission? It is to transfigure and infuse its own proper sentiments and ideas into matter. The great artist makes over, as it were, to us his own thoughts, the yearnings of his heart, and the very sentiments that enraptured him; he bears us upward on the luminous wings of his genius and makes our own the feelings that inspired him. And his work has on us the effect of a ray of the sun that shimmers in a drop of dew, vivifying and colouring it, so that the refulgent splendour of that heavenly orb gleams in it and diffuses light on every side.

If you are not convinced of these effects, observe what happens to all of us in presence of the beauty and magnificence of some great work of art. Read, for instance, the *Æneid* of Virgil, the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, and abandon yourselves to the fantasy that follows your reading. The inspiration of the ideal enters into you; your heart throbs with admiration and love: the genius of the artist will have taken possession of your whole self, will have flooded you with his own light, his own visions, and you will see with his eyes.

In the pianoforte recital of an expert, in the silvery voice that ravishes you with the sweetest notes, does it not seem as if the soul were freed from matter and disporting itself in the bosom of eternal harmony?

Did you never, as I have done, ascend in awe the dome of St. Peter's, commanding the wide horizon of Rome, and with emotion salute the King of Glory venerated beneath the vaults of that noble creation of art? Or did you never, as I have done, contemplate, mute, reverent, the sublime frescoes of Sanzio? Has your soul never

caught the fire of inspiration from the magic and powerful notes of Rossini? And in the presence of masterpieces of art, was not a community of feeling established between their authors and your heart, a common sentiment in you and them?

Here the materialist objects: "It is easy to explain this enthusiasm; your masterpiece is merely matter idealized." But I answer, No; that explanation does not suffice.

"The beauty of a thing," says St. Augustine, "is visible, but that which makes it beautiful we cannot see."

The harmony of music, the colouring of a picture, the profile of a statue are but signs, symbols of an idea. In either case the form is tenanted by an idea; but take away the *idea* and the form becomes a mere corpse. Banish the *ideas* of the Incarnation, the Passion, Paradise, and for the ideas take Nothingness. You will have but lifeless forms, and corpse-like accidents in Rossini's "Stabat."

The masterpiece considered only as so much matter has, to speak the truth, neither beauty, nor art, nor ideal, for these things act neither on our organs nor on our senses. But in the *chefs d'œuvres* of art there are two integral elements, and these are *conception* and *sensible expression*, which latter is the image or corporeal sign. A figure, therefore, sculptured in marble does not reproduce nature only, but also the concept of it, which was an act of the artist.

One day, when Beethoven was playing the piano, a deaf friend entered unseen by the musician and seated himself. Seeing reproduced one after another on the countenance of the great artist the signs of sadness, of sorrow, of gaiety, he became himself sad, sympathetic, and wept. Presently Beethoven discovered him, and, believing

it all to be the effect of his magic notes, embraced him with emotion. Only then did he remember that his friend was deaf. Deceived and wondering, Beethoven inquired, how so much emotion without hearing the music? But the effects of it were transferred to the musician's countenance, which reflected them in its expressions.

Such effects, therefore, are not reproduced by the accidents of material forms, but by the ideas they embody. It is not the *form* of the "O quam tristis," but the *idea* it embodies that brings tears to the eyes. Thus the sublimity of Rossini does not reside in the printed notes, nor in the books that are sold. No; because the notes themselves, awakened by the vibrations of the instrument, do not change in the simple transmission of motion and mechanical activity. Why are not the ecstasies of beauty awakened in the ear of a corpse? Because it needs a spiritual soul to reflect them. The true principle of art, therefore, does not reside in accidents, but in the spiritual soul.

The same can be said of poetry and rhetoric. What do the poet, the rhetorician, and the reader enjoy in common? Signs, always signs. In order that he may understand the poet and the rhetorician and make their thoughts his own, has not the reader ever before him but symbols or signs, namely, the letters, to guide him?

If you read the Æneid or the Divina Commedia you see the symbols or signs that are printed in those books, but for the reproducing of their sentiments in you it needs must that the soul of Virgil or of Dante be infused into you guided by those signs.

To appreciate works of art clothed in the splendour of universal beauty it is necessary that the soul be transformed in that beauty. The

brutes, like man, possess eyes to see them, but they are wanting in an incorporeal soul to reflect them. Man alone can understand the sublime works of art.

Let us consider for a moment the *Last Supper* of Leonardo da Vinci. Does it not seem to you as if you almost heard the words that they interchange with each other? so perfect are the reproductions in those features of the diverse dispositions of mind and the most intimate thoughts of those depicted. Do you not perceive the majesty in the face of Christ and realise the desolation in that of St. John?

To resume. *Art* by its essence furnishes the artist with the *means* of representing matter; but it needs a spiritual soul for him to succeed in it. The essence of the *artist* is found in the *power* he possesses of transfiguring matter through the work of the ideal.

And this power cannot exist but in a spiritual soul.

But the materialist ignores the art of ideal beauty. For him the conception of beauty as well as that of truth, has no existence; for him the *Transfiguration* of Sanzio is but a daub of colours.

Incapable of explaining art, they are impotent to produce it, but are ruin and vandalism personified. How could they possibly inspire the artist?

Art feeds on bold flights, on liberty, on enthusiastic emotions.

Materialism and positivism are the tomb of art, for which they can never be anything but darkness and death.

The soul yearns to conquer objects absolutely incorporeal, as *honour* and *virtue*

There is not the man who does not burn to conquer them; and the slave of the senses and

passions, even he constrains himself to make his actions conformable to reason.

Were it allowed to live amid material and sensual enjoyments, and contemporaneously to follow virtue, many would wish to do both the one and the other at the same time. But in subordinating the former to the latter there is sacrifice; and affinity, order and proportion, an absence of which would be contrary to reason, cannot be material, but must be spiritual.

History presents us with an infinite number of examples of sacrifice. Men and women, the humble and the powerful, knew how to overcome every obstacle by means of virtue, how to triumph over themselves, how to lord it over matter. And every different species of sacrifice rises to our thoughts.

The young soldier who devotes himself to his country: the mother who sacrifices herself for her children; the sister of charity who abjures the allurements of the world, who flies the sweetness of the family circle to assist the infirm; the holy missionary who, in order to call his brethren in far away lands to their celestial home, bids an abiding farewell to his earthly fatherland.

And these sacrifices are ever to be met with in the very heart of society.

But how could this happen if man were but a variety of the brute species, if he were but matter?

Whence proceed these bounds of *inspiration*, whence comes this *power*, whence this idea of *sacrifice*?

Moreover, this law of sacrifice, although not put into practice by everyone, yet it is admired and held sublime by all. "Though," says Rousseau, "the mass of mankind are evil-doers, yet few souls are so degraded as to be insensible to whatever is good." And how is this?

It comes from the fact that we admire the *good*, cherish a veneration for the *great*, and entertain a sacred enthusiasm for goodness and *beauty*, for its sheen is far more splendid in the soul than in that which emanates from matter, from science, or from art. Elevated far above all other glories, above all other beauties, triumphs the glory and beauty of *virtue*.

The sophists, with their theories, would like to improve that which is the most beautiful, the most lovely, the tenderest on our earth. Oh, poor, unhappy sophists! With your maxims you banish from your hearts all love of religion, every affection of fatherland, and, in the presence of the whole human race, assume to yourselves a tremendous responsibility.

And now, O youth, how will you act? Picture to yourselves this double spectacle. On the one hand a vast cavern without any opening towards the heavens, where every head is bent submissive to earth. Here are brought to light all the wonders of the material world. There are microscopes prepared for anatomizing all the elements of the threefold kingdom of nature; yet there is nothing here that is not also, and more perfectly, within the ken of the Christian scientist Behold *the home of materialism*.

On the other hand, a beautiful monument rises majestically towards heaven. It is a splendid cupola soaring aloft far above all other heights, and glittering with marble, bronze, and light. It is supported on four columns, and upon each of them is a symbolic statue; St. Thomas of Aquin, science personified; Michael Angelo, art; St. Vincent de Paul, charity; and on the fourth a young girl with her hands clasped and gazing towards Heaven—it is prayer. Over the façade are written these words, *Temple of spiritualism*.

Which would you enter?

On either side a voice invites you, but before entering observe the banner that floats over each.

The genius of evil unfurls a banner upon which is inscribed a word that vilifies fatherland and the family, "*Slavery.*"

The good genius, on the other hand, displays a standard, which is that of Jesus, from under the shelter of which issues forth man, family, fatherland, monarchy, the republic. On that standard gleams the word, "*Liberty.*"

The evil genius says: "Come, come; in reward I offer nothing, but shall give you the eternity of Judas."

The good genius says; "Come, come; your reward will be the light of *Liberty* and an eternity of glory."

The answer, brethren, I leave to you; to your hearts and actions.

VI.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

MAN has a spiritual soul. Now, the existence of the soul is proved by the consciousness of our own identity; by its faculties that surpass the power of matter; by virtue, by science, and by religion, without which the soul would be dead.

But this soul, must it come to an end with the body, or must it survive it?

There are many illusions in the world, and, among them all, the most terrible, and that which inspires the greatest fear, is that which whispers sweetly in your ear: "You are in the world simply to be happy. Why, then, should you wish to dig your grave before your time, watering it with your tears and travail? Why not pluck the flower of pleasure ere it whither and fall? Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself while you can, for by-and-bye death will come, and after that nothingness."

This, brethren, is the greatest danger, the perpetual temptation of man. And many, unfortunately, listen to this language, and, turning all their thoughts earthwards, close the door of their hearts to every noble aspiration, and seek felicity in mere earthly enjoyment.

The impious and stupid word of modern philosophy that man resembles brutes, that robs him

of all his nobility, of all his grandeur, of all his glory, is at once an absurdity and a blasphemy.

There is in man a something that knows not death, that survives the putrid tenant of the sepulchre; and this something is the soul, that breaks from the chains of the body, and flies to that God who has made it immortal.

The truth of the immortality of the soul is a fundamental one, important, most necessary. And if you will listen with your wonted attention and courtesy I will begin.

God, willing to effect one of His infinite thoughts, speaks. Nothingness hears Him, and forthwith the ages begin, the world is created. The earth, clothed with herb and flower, appears; the firmament studded with resplendent stars, becomes a vast reality; the sportive fish give life to the waters of the ocean, while the air is filled with the song of birds. All at once the Supreme Artist arrests Himself; the most holy Triad assembles, so to speak, consults, deliberates. It would seem as though God gathered together in Himself all His creative power for one crowning effort. And when the august council is ended He says: "*Let us make man*" (Gen. i. 26). Creating light He said: "*Be light made, and light was made*" (Gen. i. 3). Now He says: "*Let us make man*," the spectator of the universe, the reader of this great book, the priest of creation, the lord of the earth, and of all the animal life that inhabits it. With the slime of the earth man is made, but to his body God willed to unite a rational soul which might give it life and movement. Then He breathes into him a breath which He drew from His own breast, and the man lives.

The body—vile, heavy, clay-made instrument as it is—putrifies, dissolves. But the soul, what will happen to it?

The soul is without limit of time or space. It reveals the past, lays open the tomb, interrogates the dust of those who are no more, and converses with them; demonstrates the present, transports you from pole to pole with the rapidity of lightning, visiting nations, studying the customs and laws of peoples, speaking with friends even in remote regions of the earth, numbering the stars, and descending to the bowels of the earth to seek its treasures: it bounds into the future, and rends the veils which hide things that are not yet, predicts not only the movements of the stars, but even the decadence of peoples, and the ruin of nations. And, as if this were all too little, it soars to the King of Glory, fixes its gaze on His inaccessible light, adores and blesses Him, and unites itself to Him by love. In this sublime flight of the soul every creature vanishes from its vision, its horizon is enlarged, veils fall away, and when it attains to the source of life, bends low before its God, and says to Him: Behold Thy creature!

And the body, where has it remained? Here below, inert, immobile, while the Angelic butterfly was roaming in the infinite.

A soul that reveals the past, that embraces the present, enchains the future, that raises itself from earth to heaven, ought it to have the property of a vapour that merely rises, dilates, and vanishes into air?

But there is even more. The soul, not only by the faculty of its *understanding*, but also by that of its *will*, demonstrates its immortality. It is true that the soul is under the power of God; but He does not force it, does not restrict its liberty.

It may be tempted with gold, deceived by the mirage of glory, but conquered where she *wills to resist*, never.

Would you exert force against me? You may break my body, but even with the dagger at my breast the cry of my free soul is this: *I will not*

The soul, in that it is free, laughs at the contempt of the impious, at the persecutions of tyrants; for when the body is killed it is not the executioner that triumphs, it is the soul, that wings its flight from earth to heaven. There is more, again. The soul lords it over the body, and in such a manner as to constrain it to severe penance, to renounce soft comforts and pleasures, and to meet death with a smile on the face, for the triumph of its faith, for the glory of its God. Now, this sovereign, this mistress of the body, would it be fitting for it to melt into nothingness, and end with the wretched clay which it vivifies? Nor is this all. There is within us a heart that has an abiding tendency to happiness. Happiness! This is the word that moves the heart. Moreover, this sentiment of happiness is stronger than ourselves even, cannot be extinguished, and will continue to attract us irresistibly for ever. And this tendency does not come from us, but is a voice of nature. But would nature have given us such a hope to delude us? It is, therefore, in vain that we seek happiness everywhere, for it is not a flower of earth. Our heart is but an atom, yet the whole universe is too little to fill it. Let it have never so much gold, pleasures, consolations, it will never say "Enough!" but will cry out, like Cæsar, who, when master of half the world, used to say bitterly: "And is this all?"

Worldly goods do not satisfy the heart, for this needs God, who has given it the means to

attain its happiness. To the lamb the grass of the field is not wanting, nor to the lion its prey, nor to the little bird its food, and shall I alone remain unsatisfied? In this case nature would no longer be our mother, but a step-mother, a tyrant. Is this to be believed? No, for nature could not belie herself. But, like a wise mother, who, that she may save her little one from some imminent danger, shows him an object in the opposite direction, she, to encourage us to surmount the troubles of this life, shows us happiness, but beyond the tomb.

And it is for this reason that St. Paul used to preach with words full of hope, "Here we have no permanent city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. xiii. 14).

In fact, it is sufficient to look at the heavens to think of a better life, to awaken within us sentiments of a future happiness and of immortality.

There are circumstances in life when this thought reveals itself in an imperious and irresistible manner, as when overtaken by misfortune, torn by remorse, or standing around the deathbed of some dear one. Then sorrow has the privilege of shaking off indifference, and of making us think of a future life. While one suffers one hopes, and this hope calms every sorrow, soothes every pain, restores our strength. "In the midst of all my pleasures I experience only such weariness and disgust that I feel death approaching; yet am I conscious of an immense hope, that makes me raise my eyes to heaven," exclaimed a celebrated man in a moment of sadness

Victor Hugo was wont to say: "Give the people, the people who suffer and whose destiny becomes every day more difficult, give them the hope of a better world that is made for them; place this sweet and comforting hope in the plate

of poverty; then their destiny will be mitigated, and they will have patience, for patience is the fruit of hope."

And Jesus Christ has said: "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

In the same way that misfortunes awaken in us the thought of immortality, so does the same thought awaken also remorse. An illustrious writer has said: "Were it possible that during the age of reason I had mortally offended my father and he had died before I had reconciled myself with him, my remorse would be inconsolable, and, indeed, it would seem to me that the offence would be renewed each moment." But, were he convinced that beyond the grave there is nothingness, why this remorse?

Yet it is in the presence of death that the thought of the immortality of the soul is awakened in us more powerfully. Beside the death-bed of some loved one there is no longer room to doubt the immortality of the soul.

"It is so difficult," exclaimed a pious and innocent soul, "to persuade one's self that those whom we love must die, and that we can see them no more! He who has given hope must surely also grant its fulfilment."

When you gaze on the lifeless form of one held dear, of father, mother, wife, brother, or friend; when you see the face that used to smile on you with such benignity turn pale; when you see that dying glance that used to be fixed on you with so much love and interest; when you feel the hand that was wont to grasp yours with such affection now insensible to your kisses; when you gaze on those lips now closed in death, but whose words were sweet music in your ears; when you hear around you weeping and the echo of the sorrowful strain, "*He is dead! he is dead!*" can you say,

"All is now over: I shall see him no more—no, never?"

Far from it. We shall be convinced of seeing our dear ones again in another and beautiful life. Were it not so we could turn on God and say to Him, "Thou hast deceived me, for Thou hast given me a false hope, a love which has belied itself."

Were everything to end with the grave our life would be a hell, an infamy, always tormented, and so short withal. Charity, friendship, love, would be nothing more than illusions; truth and justice would be but chimeras. And who could think such a thing and not suffocate the noblest instincts of the heart?

How can we explain the thought born within us at the sight of a grave? Is it the little dust contained in it that inspires our admiration, our love? No; it is because from the grave there comes a voice that says, "No, all is not ended here." The cultus of the tomb has always been sacred among every people, because among all nations there is a rooted conviction that there is something which survives death, and that this something cannot be matter, which is susceptible of decomposition, but must be the soul, which is spirit and life. "*All the subtleties of metaphysics,*" said Rousseau, "*will never succeed in making me doubt the immortality of my soul for a single moment. I feel it, I believe it, I hope it, I will it, and I shall defend it till my last breath.*" Hence it is that belief in the immortality of the soul is found among every people; it is an article of the creed of all humanity.

And not only so, but this credence has obtained in all ages and in every country.

Abraham consoled himself for the sacrifice of Isaac through faith in the resurrection. Tobias

taught his son charity, pointing out to him eternal life. Job, abandoned by all, comforted himself by the hope of rising from the grave. The Maccabees yielded their limbs to the executioner, saying, "These I have from . . . God; . . . I hope to *receive* them again from Him" (Mac. vii. 11). The Psalmist, the Prophets, all alike, sing the delights of the just man, and depict the sufferings of the wicked, damned by God. The Chaldeans believe it is in the stars that man is punished or rewarded; the Egyptians and the Greeks believe in their Elysian fields; the Persians in their Paradise. And Rome? Suffice it to read the Æneid of Virgil and the Tusculan Disputations of Cicero to convince one's self of how great was the Roman respect for the grave. The *form*, indeed, varies, but the *belief* is the same all the world over. And God willed to carve the word "*Immortality*" in the very depths of the soul, and to make it a torch whose light should gleam through the blackest darkness of barbarism.

In the forests of the New World a mother will suspend the cradle of her lost babe to the branches of a tree, and sweetly rock it the more easily to gaze at the child that is still her own.

On the arid coasts of Africa the ferocious Hottentot asks that in death his arrows and bow be placed by his side that he may be able to fight in the land of souls; and savages believe they hear in the sighing of the winds the souls of their dear ones.

When the poor Indian mother, with tears in her eyes, goes to pour milk on the grave of her child, when on the sepulchre of the warrior his companions place food, just as if his soul still needed nourishment, the idea of immortality, though changed by all these gross errors, yet is not denied, but confirmed by them. And this

universal consent of all men, must we not recognize the voice of truth in it? Powerful passions have endeavoured to stifle this voice, but have not succeeded in doing so. Were it, indeed, only a solitary voice, yet would it be enough to awaken hope and fear; but, instead, it is the voice of all humanity, it is the voice of God.

Of God? Here is the argument of those who boldly deny the immortality of the soul. They say: "God *could* destroy the soul, and we cannot tell whether or no He will preserve it." Well, let us not discuss whether or no God *can* destroy the soul; for us it is enough to have irrefutable arguments that He does not, and will not do so.

In God every perfection is gathered together: wisdom, goodness, sanctity, justice. But, if everything ended with death, where would all these perfections be? Where would be the wisdom of God, were our soul to perish? He has given man a law, which is the expression and measure of duty; there cannot, therefore, be wanting sanction in the reward of those who observe it, and in the punishment of those who offend against it. If everything were to end on earth we should find this sanction here; but where? Perchance in human law? But how many crimes are committed *sub rosa*! . . . how many infamies escape the law? and how often does the law itself serve as a veil to the abuse of human power! Perchance, then, in public opinion? But how many offences public opinion condones instead of, as it should do, condemning them! and how many does it condemn when it ought to condone? The sanction, then, will perhaps be found in remorse? But remorse, is it not the ghost of a future life which rises threatening before the guilty? To escape remorse a little poison or a pistol would be sufficient, and then God and society, instead of

finding a guilty man, would find but a corpse. Where, then, is to be found the sanction of Divine law? They answer: "In that peace which accompanies the practice of virtue." But how many virtues practised could not aspire to this prize because of the human motives in them?

Where, again, would be the reward of heroism, of sacrifice? A man is dragged into the presence of a tyrant who, while barbarously torturing him, cries: "Abjure thy faith, or die;" and the martyr answers, "I will die," suffers in silence, and dies smiling. Where is his reward? Take another case. A young soldier is placed in a post of the greatest peril. Were he to leave it he would be saved, but duty, the good name of the army, the honour of his colours, the salvation of his country detain him, he remains, and dies at his post. Where is the prize for this hero? Oh, his name will be noised abroad! But to what end do they talk of him, weep at his name, and place flowers o'er his grave, if nothing of him remain? To sacrifice one's self for one's country is beautiful, sublime; and the soldier who gives his life for his fatherland, who throws himself courageously, a very hero, into the midst of the enemy, is worthy of admiration. But if everything were to end with death, such sacrifice would be mere insanity, and that soldier ought to have his medals snatched from his breast, for he has not preserved that which, if this world is his all and his end, is of supreme value, that is, his life. He who denies the immortality of the soul, denies not only his country, but all humanity itself.

The sanction of law being wanting, where would be the wisdom of God? Had He created in order to destroy, His work would have been the work of a child. And besides, why destroy the *soul* when nothing else in this world either is or

can be destroyed? Take an atom, divide it, subdivide it again and again, but you will never succeed in destroying it. And why should the soul alone be destroyed? If the soul were to end with the body, man's life would be but that of the brutes which he commands, of the grass which he treads under foot, and would, in fact, be less durable than his own works. How could God, who has treated even the very least of His creatures with such solicitude, do away with His own masterpiece?

Would it be possible to conceive Raphael in presence of his "Transfiguration," or Michael Angelo before his "Moses," entertaining the idea of destroying those sublime creations of their genius? And it is utterly repugnant to our mind to view God as an inexplicable Being using His power to create millions of souls only to destroy them after death. There would be no *wisdom* in this; and if we saw it in man we should call it *madness.*

Moreover, in such a hypothesis, where would be the *goodness* and *sanctity* of God? His eye penetrates everywhere. He sees disorders, immorality; hears the clamour of brutal orgies; sees horrible crimes that to us are hidden in darkness, beholds how injustice triumphs and how the just are oppressed and weep, sees unjustifiable wars drenching countries in blood. But would He be holiness, goodness, justice, were He to leave iniquity unpunished? On the other hand, He sees virtue nourished by sacrifice, the martyrs of religion, the victims of society, the heroes who give themselves up for their country, the courage, the strength, and sacrifices of faith. Are all these to look in vain for recompense and reward? But how could God, Who is holiness and justice itself, be equally honoured by the sacrifice of

innocence and the horrors of crime? Could He behold vice and virtue, impiety and faith, with impartial eye? Then farewell to the idea of good and evil; to the wisdom, holiness, and justice of God; then, in short, God no more!

Were everything to end with death, where would be the punishment of evil, where the reward of virtue?

Cast a glance around on society. What do you see? Vice that ridicules, virtue amid suffering, honesty in the midst of poverty, viciousness that struts proudly along with blasphemy on the lip: the honest man despised and the evil-doer rolling in wealth. And now, while the wicked and the impious are awaiting punishment, and the just and the good their reward, would it be now that God would confound the one with the other in the same abyss of nothingness? How! is he who has been robbed to be confounded with the robber? He who has betrayed and sold his country to have the same destiny as he who has shed his heart's blood for it? The son who through his wickedness was the death of his father to have the same end as the one who has ever been docile and obedient? Was, then, the evil-doer right to enjoy the fruits of rapine, and the just wrong to live the life of sacrifice? Shall, then, the grave of the persecutor be strewn with flowers, and that of his victim remain unhonoured? And will there afterwards remain but nothingness for each of them?—But surely there is a God?

Let us approach, brethren, a death-bed. It is before that spectacle that we shall be able to apprehend better the secrets of immortality.

Behold a young girl just out of childhood, when life, though very active, is but little felt. She has now passed out of adolescence, when life,

though much felt, is but little understood. She was a docile child, a chaste maiden, and afterwards a model of virtue; deprived of her parents and the love of brothers and sisters, the poor used to call her an angel. Now she lies on her death-bed, smiling on her friends, all of whom are weeping around her. Calm and resigned, she rests her eyes on the image of Jesus crucified, and kissing the cross, exclaims: "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Well, is God to answer the prayer of this angel with the cruel words: *"I destroy you?"*

This life which has been dedicated entirely to God, which, like a grain of incense, has been offered before Him, as well as all the many noble sacrifices sustained purely for Him alone, would have no other recompense than a sickness, an illusion, and nothingness? Even we, disinterested spectators as we are, are moved at that sight, and should God alone remain insensible to it? Man, then, would be a better and more just judge than God. But there is not the man who can tolerate such a blasphemy!

Observe now another young girl, a shame of her sex, the bane of her family, a disgrace to youth, but whom we see in the last struggles of her agony. Her latest breath is without repentance, and an insult to every moral law.

Now, then, brethren, must we write on the coffin of the pious girl: "She lived, but on a dream;" and on the grave of the dishonoured woman, "She was not wrong?" Would God give nothingness to each of them alike? Could you believe it? And thou, human conscience, canst thou admit such a monstrosity? If this were to be so, the libertine who tramples under foot the laws of God, who insults and denies Him, would be wise; while he who should practise

virtue and duty, who should venerate God, obey and adore Him, would be a fool.

St. Louis firmly defending the faith and civilization at every hazard; the martyrs under Tiberius, gloating over their blood; St. Vincent de Paul working miracles of charity; the vicious man running after every pleasure; all to be treated equally beyond the grave! Were it to be so we ought to say with Cæsar, "Virtue, thou art but an empty word," and echo the blasphemous dictum, "God is evil." If all the mass of mankind, the good seed and the bad, were to be sown in the same furrow, if nothingness reigned beyond the grave, if death as an eternal silence were to succeed so many sighs repressed, so many infamies consummated, and so much blood uselessly spilt, if everything were to be hidden away for ever in the winding-sheet, then indeed we ought to exclaim, "God is evil!"

O, my God, I do not blaspheme, but proclaim and defend Thy justice! When the world shall end, and God shall look at the destruction of all things, He will say, "From this world there have passed the souls of many who have suffered in following what is right, and many others who have given themselves over to pleasure in following what is evil; now, however, all is over." But is this possible? No! For God could not have created man to be indifferent to good and evil, to punishment and reward. True, with God all things are possible, but not evil and absurdity.

Therefore, brethren, let us console ourselves when here below we see virtue oppressed, and vice triumphant. For the day will come when all this will change, and on the day of death the veil will be raised. Then shall we behold the just crowned with eternal glory, the impious condemned to everlasting punishment.

And now, brethren, allow me to add one more to the arguments already advanced.

Who are they who admit the immortality of the soul, and who are they who deny it? Here the world is divided into two great categories, on the one side are all the followers of vice, and on the other all those who practise virtue.

Well, let us raise our voice and interrogate them. O, you who have been the scourges of humanity, Nero, Domitian, Cromwell, usurpers, homicides, what do you want? Have you any desire to survive? Do you wish your soul to be immortal? "No," they answer; "let it die, let it die with our body!"

And you, you whom virtue regards as her sons, what is your desire? Mark the unanimous cry that rises on every side. These all, without exception, invoke immortality.

Whom, tell me, shall we believe; the bad who cry out for the death of the soul, or shall we not rather believe the good who desire immortal life?

My God, I well knew before, that no *created* force could have destroyed my soul; I knew well that *Thou*, wise, holy, and just, couldst not will its destruction. But now doubt is doubly impossible. Virtue and innocence themselves have pronounced the sentence that *the soul is immortal.*

I should have finished, but as brutish aspirations preoccupy men's minds so strongly, allow me to add just another word.

The dogma of the immortality of the soul and of a future life is also willed by *liberty*, by *social interest*, by *civilization*, and by the *safety of the people.* Therefore, the country's most reckless and dangerous enemies are those who deny this dogma. And history itself forms a terrible lesson giving conclusive evidence of this. We see throughout how peoples and nations pursue their

way to decadence and ruin when once they lose faith in the immortality of the soul. On the other hand, however, let a people be never so barbarous and degraded, yet if they raise altars and temples, if they believe in a future life, if the soldiers of this people, like the legions of Arminius coming from the German forests, fight with enthusiasm for the prize that awaits the hero, and at the same time fear the punishment awaiting the coward, then the armies of civilized nations who do not believe in anything will have no power against them. The trained army of unbelief would be as an army of the dead fighting with one of the living.

Who remembers and fears not the disasters of Varrus?

And what would become of the world without this dogma of the soul's immortality? Abolish this doctrine, and virtue would have no more attractions, vice no restraint. The earth would become but a theatre of disaster and crime. Nor do I exaggerate. Remember those days when France was given up to orgies and immersed in blood, when Maximilian Robespierre himself used to exclaim in terror, "The good and the bad will vanish from the face of the earth, though not in the same condition; death is no eternal sleep, but the beginning of eternity." Figuier, the materialist, hesitated not to say, "It was not petroleum, but materialism that destroyed the monuments of France." And, indeed, just as spiritualism is life, so is materialism death. It is death because civilization, liberty, habits, form an unbroken chain of which immortality is the last link; break it and the whole chain will go.

It is said that the last hero of Poland, when falling on the battle-field, cried, "*Finis, Poloniæ.*" Ah! my brethren, alas, we are near to being able

to reiterate this cry, and to exclaim, "*The fatherland is no more.*" When among a people those who believe in the immortality of the soul, in the justice of a God who punishes and rewards, are overpowered by materialism: when its insane doctrines find an echo in the hearts of the people and the crowd takes them up, then it is that we shall be able to cry, "*Finis Italiæ*," for we shall have anarchy within and invasion without.

But I cherish the hope that the soul will triumph in this conflict between the true and false science. And to you, generous youth, to you especially is entrusted the task of preserving intact the liberty and safety of your country by resisting the invading doctrine of materialism.

It is yours, by your best endeavours, by word, by energy of will, by actions worthy of her immortal destinies, to prepare this liberty, this glory for your fatherland.

VII.

THE END OF LIFE.

HAVING proved that God exists and that He has created men, it is now necessary to ask ourselves the question: "*For what end did God create man?*"

Unhappily, man does not fix his eyes intently on his true end, but, carried away by passion, loses sight of it. Hence the vast majority live in utter disregard of it.

Yet still more painful is it to see this carelessness or ignorance supported by the teaching and maxims of those who, for party reasons, strain every effort to repress truth—efforts, however, which are as old as the hills.

Experience tells us that the bad, in the perversion of their minds, have said: "Our days are few and evil; beyond the grave man can expect only nothingness, for from its abyss he comes, and into the same abyss he will return. Our only object, therefore, must be the enjoyment of present good: let us, then, hasten to enjoy the many beautiful things of creation while we can, and encircle our brows with garlands of roses. This is the true end of man's life." These maxims have borne their natural fruits; and the page of history relates plainly how there have been times when rebellion against God has found its counter-

part in the surging wave of a chronic disease making havoc among the people. True it is that man has always turned away from his true end; but never so doggedly as at the present time. Reason and faith ally themselves uselessly now against the perfidy of these moribund maxims. Against this worldly Utopia the voice of those zealous for the public good is raised to no purpose, for they obtain no hearing, and in the din of battle waged against them by every passion their voice dies away unheard, like that of one who, amidst the roar of the tempest, cries in vain to the skipper to avoid the perils of the sea. And sad is it to realize that nowadays the warning voice of those who would redeem the life of their brethren, of the family, of society, of fatherland, of humanity, is altogether ignored.

In boasting the triumph of matter, the knowledge of the true end of man is forgotten, while every effort is made to imbue society with those disquieting and lying maxims which falsify that end, and which, while attracting all, allure the heart of youth especially, to gain over whom every device is resorted to in this pernicious proselytism.

Who does not see the work that the partisans of these doctrines are doing to promulgate them on every side? Who does not note the immensity of the danger that looms ahead? And could I, then, remain silent in presence of such facts? Even were my poor words to produce no other fruit than that of a note of music, which is no sooner heard than gone for ever, yet must I not be silent: no, I *will* not be silent.

But I hope God will deign to make my poor words penetrate the depth of some soul now on the road to destruction and save it from the grievous consequences of error.

The first questions that spontaneously present themselves to the mind when, arrived at the age of virility, at that of reflection, we wish to know the *reasons* for the dogmas of our religion, are: *Why am I in this world? Why have I received life? What is the end of life?*

To these incisive interrogations we must reply; but not esteem as worthy of consideration whatsoever answers are given to these problems by every phase of philosophic and religious thought.

The solutions advanced present various doctrines, the most important of which we will examine.

One maintains that the end of life is *a man's own interest*; and can be defined thus: *to concentrate every faculty of life in the worship of self-interest and the goods of this earth.*

Let us try now to prove how this brutish doctrine would act on *the man* and on *society.*

To what would it reduce *the man?* To being a mere brute beast, an egotist, calculating, self-interested, miserly, usurious; it would destroy in him that which is most sublime, that which is, indeed, to life, what air is to the lungs, or love to the heart—the spirit of sacrifice.

How many perfidious deeds are done by men through seeking only that which serves their present interest! The self-interested say to themselves: "I shall not do this or that simply to be useful to others:" while, on the other hand, he who is animated by the spirit of sacrifice says ever: "Since it will be for the advantage of others I shall do so-and-so." And now just let us consider what would be the tenor of life of the self-interested man.

He is, my brethren, one who sees no more, feels no more, thinks no more; who repels the poor lest they should encroach on his resources, for pity

can find no way to his heart. If sought by the widow or orphan he will fraudulently take advantage of them, and, esteeming the poor man who but asks for work, as a slave and an outcast, turns on his heel at the sight of him. Faith and religious belief he sells without a blush of shame, and, indeed, he makes sale of everything—of justice, of loyalty, of honour. One thing alone he knows, and that is *Gold;* and his soul is pent up in his purse.

Such men are simply monsters, enemies of society, who, as in the time of Plato, ought to be ousted not only by the State but by every loyal and honest man.

To degrade thus the mystic beauty of the soul is without doubt to entail the greatest mischief. If interest be established as the end of life what incalculable detriment must inevitably be done to society and the country! And to what will they come?

An emporium where everything is traded with, an Oriental bazaar, where truth, justice, conscience, honour, everything, would be on sale and regarded as a means of money-making. Hence inconceivable damage, party contest, the destruction of all existing order.

Another school maintains that *Pleasure* is the end of life. But you have only to observe what harm is done to the soul and to society by this doctrine to understand at once how still more pernicious it is than the preceding. Pleasure causes the soul not only to wither and become egotistical, but renders it cowardly also, a soul upon which the country cannot rely, for it will take fright at everything, not to mention that a craven will, as a legitimate consequence, be a cruel man. Reason alone, however, is enough to withstand the invasion of this maxim, formed as it is

to give place to the vilest passions and to contend with brute beasts in sensual gratifications. For would God have created man to limit all his ideas, all his hopes to the visible, to that which can be weighed and measured? Is everything, this mind that embraces the universe, this soul that nothing here can satisfy, these hopes that are my strength, are they all to end in the darkness of the tomb? Thus virtue, duty, glory, and liberty are to be accounted lifeless names? We must draggle in the mire and envy the brutes who, without, however, meeting with any incongruities in doing so, can obey these self-same theories?

Having traced the effect of such a doctrine on *the man*, let us reflect on the destiny of a *people* under its power. In a short time all those estimable qualities that do honour to mankind would be esteemed as idle prejudices; corruption of customs would quickly follow, while those who live in hardship and suffering would look with ferocious envy on those who abound in the good things of the world. We, ministers of the God of Sorrow, say: "Be patient, be resigned." But he, to whom wretchedness and want are familiar, with the deep lines of care on hunger's pale and hollow face, showing us his children asking for bread, but to whom he can reply with nought but the tears of compassion, those children, whose limbs all stiff with cold, he can warm with only caresses and kisses, he, I say, when speaking of the work he cannot get would say: "Why, if I be the strongest, why do I suffer? I have had suffering and wretchedness enough; now I too must have *my* cup of pleasure." Thus does he sharpen his weapons in the dark that he may contend with society for his share of pleasure. You condemn him? But why, if you establish pleasure as the end of existence? In this way society becomes an

arena wherein egotism and sanguinary appetite meet in mortal conflict.

Then, besides these, there is a third assumption, which takes *Glory* as the end of life.

But what is this glory, that your souls are suddenly inflamed at the mere mention of its name?

Glory is that sublime attraction, the idea of which raises mysterious flutterings in the hearts of the young who, full of emotion, con the pages that tell of the deeds of Alexander or of Napoleon; that in the breasts of all men gives birth to the fragrance of an eternal spring-tide. Glory is the tomb of great celebrities, it is the light that, in the din of battle, beams on the soldier's brow; glory makes us revere the memory of the famous dead, whose funerals are like a resurrection; it is the thought of glory that inspires man to sublime actions, and glory it is which causes us to uncover as a celebrated and illustrious man passes by.

Well, is this the end of our life? Ah! no. The end of life? Oh! how infinitely more noble and sublime it is!

The Holy Scriptures say, "All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the grass; the grass is withered, and the flower thereof is fallen away" (1 Peter i. 24). Glory is, you know well, capricious; to-day she may conduct you to a pinnacle of fame, and to-morrow plunge you into the ocean of oblivion. Look at the great scientists, the fortunate conquerors, the potent kings who are now no more; where are they? Only their remembrance in legend and history remains of them; for the rest, everything ended with death and the grave. Let me add that glory, *apart from duty*, is but a splendid fiction, a magnificent blunder, and I have said enough about it.

But what, then, is the end of life? Religion answers, *God!* Yes, the human race is attracted to God, who, in His infinite love, creating man, inspires him to raise himself to Him. For just as the earth has been created for man, so has man been created for God. Are you not convinced? Well, then, interrogate your own selves and tell me if God is not the only true, the only possible, the one necessary end for an intelligent being.

God!—The Infinite!

A strong characteristic of human nature is its necessity for that which is infinite, for God. Indeed, it is impossible to do without Him, and this is why, as step by step we advance towards happiness, we obey that interior yearning of the soul that longs to embrace God.

Would you have a proof of this? Look once more into your own hearts, where you will find nothing limited, but everything aspiring to the Infinite, to God. Consider the instinct of life. Man does not ask for months, years, or centuries of existence, all of which added together would be insufficient to satiate his ardent desire of life; but he asks only the one thing, that his existence *never cease*. Tell me, would you be satisfied if you could count the centuries of those who, on the first morning of the countless ages gone by, sang the hymn of creation? Oh, no, and hence is it that the old are so much attached to life.

In short, man, though a *limited* entity, tends to the *illimitable*, and cannot reconcile himself to the idea of death and annihilation. Count his years, and he grows quite choleric; fix a limit to his days, and he burns with anger. And when he himself sees death approaching, he says, "I am not satisfied yet," for his desires fly farther afield.

True it is that the Holy Scriptures tell us of men who lived for centuries, but even these lives

would be all too short for us, we will none of death.

Apelles painted on canvas which time corroded and destroyed, yet to those who questioned him he would reply, "I am painting for eternity;" and nothing but the memory is left of him now. This is, too, the true answer of every soul, "I will eternity." But not an eternity of terrestrial life, for this is so insufficient that we wish to abandon it to fly to other and happier realms to live. Often, too, do we find the path of this calvary so rough that even the holiest souls ardently long to be at the end of it. Again, whenever a human being turns to God and exclaims, "Here is my life, I return it to Thee," even there is one who longs to fly to a better life, who would enter its unknown fields, and violate the immutable trust of his soul by suicide.

Thus does our soul impel us, our soul which tends to the sublime, to the Infinite, to God.

Every other faculty of our being is still more insatiable. Our mind being formed to apprehend and constantly attracted by the charm of her hidden mysteries, we throw ourselves into the outstretched arms of science. The aspirations of our mind are bounded by a limitless horizon where the soul is overcome by dizziness. Yet it is not even here that the mind, like an eagle on a mountain peak, will rest; but it soars beyond the measureless azure of the firmament where light, electricity, and magnetism meet together in stupendous efforts, continuing the sublime work of creation.

And now, guided by the light of philosophy, let us descend into the abyss of a human being to study and analyze him.

We see these thoughts, instincts, passions, present themselves in all their formidable variety, in

every kind of complication, like most difficult and important problems. And this scene is indeed magnificent, far more attractive than any which material nature has to offer us.

Well, it is not in this world of psychology that the understanding establishes herself; but mathematicians, astronomers, physicians, naturalists, one and all echo the voice that came from Goëthe: "*Light! Light!*" and there alone is its home. Little by little, as one nears the ethereal regions, their *infinite greatness* surrounds him, and his own infinite littleness confounds him. But, like Columbus, who (realizing that the idea of the unexplored was not a foolish one, landed on the coast of the New World, and thus assigned a limit to the ocean) broke through the boundaries of the then human ken, so the mind of man constantly wings its rapid flight to the illimitable ocean of the hitherto unknown. Yet always, and despite its investigations, unsatisfied, it pierces like a flash of lightning through time and space, and still unsatiated, asks: "*And then? . . . and then?*"

Poor spirit of man, to what dost thou aspire? What dost thou ask? Ah: do you follow me? *It wills eternity, the infinite, the absolute . . . it wills God.*

And once arrived at the infinite, will our understanding rest there? St. Augustine used to say: *Our desires will be everlasting, but always unsatisfied.*

What, then, can we say of our heart? Like the little bird that was made to fly, so our heart was formed to love. From love springs life, and in love it ends; everything comes from love, and to love returns. Were it not to serve the heart the understanding would be a fatal treasure. The celebrated Bossuet says: "*Perish that science which teaches not love!*" Are not "to love" and "to be

loved" celestial words—words synonymous with happiness? Indeed, *happiness* depends for its very existence on the heart. But is our heart ever satisfied? Inundate it with every affection, that of friends, of brothers and sisters, of father and mother, give it the love of fatherland, of society, of humanity. . . . Well, is the heart satisfied? No, certainly not. The tears of the most fortunate, the sighs that well from the bosom of those who know at least something of happiness, all tell us plainly, "*No.*" And history records that those who have enjoyed the very greatest worldly prosperity would frequently say that nothing of it all could possibly yield them true happiness. Solomon himself used to aver: "All things are vanity" (Ecclesiastes xii. 8); and St. Augustine tells us how that all that is on the earth is not enough for happiness. Add to this the lamentations of those nowadays who, amidst all the resources of pleasure, cannot satisfy their heart.

What is it, then, that our heart craves for? There is, in truth, nothing that can fill its bottomless abyss. For lo! we are attracted by something that pleases us for the moment, but anon, having sucked its pleasure, it gives our heart no satisfaction —our heart which like a butterfly, flitting from flower to flower, is ever in motion, but never satisfied. What, then, is it in quest of? Our heart seeks the *Infinite;* seeks *God.* And until we actually attain Him, so long will our heart tease us with its aspirations, so long will it cause us the suffering of an unsatisfied, burning desire of Love, the object of which love is God. Let our heart, therefore, transport us on the wings of love to God.

Even in a heart perverted, turned away from God, His sublime traces remain, indelibly carved there for ever, and, therefore, a sublime and

glorious tendency still lifts it ever upward towards its Lord and Maker. There have been cases in which children at their very birth have been snatched from their mother, so that never once did they see her sweet smile or feel her tender caresses. But, later on in life, when restored to the maternal embrace, mother and child have gazed into each other's faces, and then the child has recognized its mother; for a mysterious voice whispers him: "This is she who gave you birth," and forthwith the pent-up feelings of his young heart burst forth in tears of joy at finding that long-lost mother. And just in the same way our heart is conscious of God—of God who is its first beginning and its last end.

Interrogate susceptibility. Is it ever satisfied? No. Let us ask our capacity for action if it can say; "*It is enough.*" Perchance, like Hannibal's, it reposes contentedly on its laurels? Ah! no; it looks forward to the victories of the morrow. Inquire, then, of the Artist's imagination. But the sight of beauty animates its insatiability, for the artist is the prey of his inward consciousness of impotency to grasp the ideal of his conception, and hence a void in his heart.

Yet this tendency of the imagination towards the infinite shows itself more plainly in music. The musician listens to his harmonies, hangs on their echoes as they melt into distance, and still he dwells on those rapturous strains . . . but far, far away in his ideal world he hears still greater beauties, and then comes the sense of tormenting discomfort. The more profound the musician the nearer the approach to his ideal—but as he nears it, alas! he sees it recede.

What, then, is this ideal? It is God.

And you, how do the great masterpieces of art affect you? While in sweet transports you listen

to the delights of Rossini, do you not feel as though reposing in the bosom of eternal harmonies? This is the effect produced in us by Art—an effect at once mysterious, divine, and irresistible. Emmanuel Kant has said: "The beautiful in the Infinite, seen through the finite; it is God seen from a distance." And we need not to be artists to enjoy the luxury of such emotions. Who is there among you from whose breast a serene and starry night has not drawn forth a sigh from the soul? Which of you has not felt a sweet and chastened calm steal over the heart at sight of a roseate dawn or the grandeur of an autumn sunset? And have you not said then: "Oh, my heart, what more do you need? What is your desire? What wouldest thou? Why fix thy gaze on those topmost heights? Why cast thy eye on mysterious and unexplored horizons? My soul what dost thou ask? Why so sad?"

One evening St. Augustine was sitting on the sea shore contemplating the last rays of the setting sun, and his soul seemed to ask: "Oh, sea, is it you, perchance, for which I sigh?" To which a hidden voice, "*Seek above us.*" Then presently serene night spread over the earth, and the Saint asked the stars: "Is it you that are wanting to me?" To which the same voice again: "Seek above us." And then, springing to his feet, he soars to the Eternal, and exclaims with holy fervour: "Now, my soul, art thou satiated? Oh, my God, it is Thou alone who canst make me happy."

Yes, the object of our soul, in its yearning after both truth and beauty, is God. He alone is our last end—the last end of our life that hurries away like the wind, the last end of our lawful affections, the last end of our legitimate pleasures,

in short, our one and only object is God. Hence the end of life is not to be found on earth.

Oh, terrestrial being, child of earth, learn that He who knows only the truth knows more than all thou knowest. Perhaps thou also wilt one day exclaim: "Too late have I known it; too late have I loved it."

But love it at least in future.

Yet just one word more. Till the present I have spoken to you in the name of Reason. Suffer me now to address you in that of Faith—of that Faith which we professed in Holy Baptism.

Look, Christians, into that poor stable. See you that Infant, weeping and trembling? That Babe is the Son of the Eternal Father.

Why such poverty?—those tears? And the angels answer: "*It is for you and for your salvation, that you may attain your end.*"

Behold Him again, now fleeing into exile to escape the cruelty of Herod, now first shedding His Blood in His circumcision. But why? Ah, His Holy Mother answers: "*It is for you and for your salvation, that you may attain your end.*"

See Him later on, a youth, stooping to the humility of the carpenter's shop. And why? His Holy Angel Guardian replies: "*It is for you and for your salvation, that you may attain your end.*"

Behold Him lastly on Calvary, all covered with wounds and bleeding, dying on the Cross between two malefactors. Again, why? And He Himself answers: "*It is for you and for your salvation, that you may attain your end.*"

Have we brethren, but faith we need no other

proof that God alone is the only possible end of our existence. But how are we to attain such an exalted end? Simply by doing in this world what we shall do in the next. And what shall we do in Heaven? "We shall see God *as He is*," says St. John (1 John iii. 2).

But in order to merit the Beatific Vision we must think of beginning to know God here below.

What else, however, shall we do in Heaven? We shall love God with an *undivided* love, for He is the supreme good. Moreover, in Heaven we shall fully possess the most important, the only necessary object of our heart's aspirations—God, God whom we shall possess, too, with the certainty of eternal possession.

But what must we do to merit all this? We must yield ourselves to God that He may possess us. We must obey His laws, bend to His Holy Will.

So that to know, love, and serve God here below, that we may enjoy Him for ever in Heaven—this, as our Holy Religion teaches us, is the end of life.

VIII.

GOD AND SOCIETY.

My brethren, we have seen how that God has given us a spiritual and immortal soul for the express purpose of knowing, loving, and serving Him in this world, that we may be happy with Him for ever in the next. But has He, together with life, given us also independence of His will? Yet, mark you, distinguish well between *independence* and *liberty*. I speak not of the latter, but of the former—of *independence*. Now, I ask you, are we independent of God, or has He rights over us?

Nowadays, we hear on all sides that the government of society is no longer possible, because the principle of authority is unrecognized, and that its exercise, so far from meeting with docile submission, only generates envy and aversion, and calls into activity an attitude of defiance to all law and order. And, accepting the position as inevitable, this causal degradation of morality, together with rampant, unbridled passions and the natural resultant, a constant *increase* in the spirit of insubordination, produce only the sighs of a hopeless discontent that looks for nothing better.

But what, then, is the remedy for these evils, consequent on the idolatry of the human *I*, or, which is the same thing, for *atheism*, the basis of those theories which end in the cultus of this EGO? Simply the active recognition of God's *rights*, of our dependence on His Will. How can we expect men who reject the authority of God to submit to that of man? When we pretend to constitute society without God, on a basis of reason and morality, enthroned in the room of religion; when from University chairs it is promulgated that prime and final causes are nothing but contemptible abstractions, and that, even supposing there be a God, He does not concern Himself about us, but that on the contrary man is absolute and irresponsible in his actions; and when to these maxims they add the example of insubordination, of the apotheosis of intrigue, and of making sport of oppression; when they play fast and loose with the fundamental laws of right and wrong: when, I say, we have reached these extremes, the public conscience must necessarily be deprived of all human guidance, and thence, their very foundation having disappeared, all order, stability, tranquility, and peace must be wanting to society. Hence Prudhomme wrote: "On the day on which our fathers made the declaration of their rights, authority was denied to both heaven and earth, and government, even by popular delegation was rendered impossible." And a few lines later on he added, with unanswerable logic: "The only alternative is anarchy or Cæsarism." And this, brethren, must be the inevitable and fatal dilemma of men who reject conscience, ignore the rights of God, and, taking those of man as their only religion, refuse to subject them to the claims of God. And, moreover, what would be the result of recognizing

human, but denying God's rights? Were I to read you the answer from the page of history you would be simply horrified at the recital. Bloodshed and crime; popular leaders imposing on the public confidence till, clothed with power, they became tyrants, who threw into the shade the enormities of those others they succeeded only to out-Herod; all this, and more still, would stare you in the face.

And now, to-day, the would-be apostles of the rights of the unhappy people turn out the cruelest tyrants of all, maintaining that they have perfected science, and can offer an antidote to every ill, while in truth it is only an imposture of science, and their language but a sorry cloak to profanity. In life they sacrifice thousands by their illusions, and after death cause the loss of thousands more through their instruments.

What, then, are human rights apart from those of God? They are but weak credulity and chimerical dreams. Whence would they come? Whence their moral sanction or authority? How could they be reduced to practice? Nay, more, how could they possibly have been conceived?

But, tell me, how can you equalize force unless you take the law of gravitation into consideration? or how can you continue to enjoy its heat if you extinguish the fire? What! you abjure the sun, and then would still have all that it means, light, heat, and the perpetuation of animal and vegetable life? Very well, then; if you would have order and security in society, do not talk of reducing God to nothing. God is the origin of all *beings* that are, and also of their *mutual relations*. He is the source not of *life* only, but also of *order*, of *justice*, of *peace*, of all *stability*, and of all *liberty* whatsoever. He is, in a word, the *centre*, and the *harmony* of the world.

Now, God has made laws for the body as well as the soul. It is God who dictates laws to every created thing that is, nor can man himself escape the obligation of obeying them. Hence the study of God's rights is a study the most useful of all, the most indispensable, and the most strictly *social*, for the very reason that respect for the rights of God carries with it respect for the rights of man, that is, of society. We will, therefore, consider our relations with God, our duty as His creatures, His claim as Creator on the life of us His creatures; in short, the place He has assigned to man in the midst of creation, the harmonic beauty of which reveals a sublime artist.

Man is the lord and king of terrestrial creation: but is he also its absolute and irresponsible lord? All that is both in, and upon, earth submits to him: but has he himself no superior beyond those starry heavens? Science teaches us that the work of creation is still proceeding; that it is a constant act of ascending, step by step, from the mineral to the vegetable world, from that to the animal kingdom, and from thence to man; a beautiful truth in direct opposition to the materialistic theories of evolutionism. And this abiding act of ascending progression in the scheme of creation evidences the fact that man is not, as it were, the final term of this act, but that the act of progressive ascension must continue till it end in God Himself, the origin of all things, the prime cause of all existences.

But the materialists' *reason* for the negation of God? What is it? It is, that were they to recognize Him as Creator, they would be obliged to admit Him as Legislator.

To convince ourselves, however, that God is the absolute Ruler and Master of our littleness, it is amply sufficient to look into ourselves and to con-

sider briefly, Firstly, our *Position*; Secondly, our *Acts*; Thirdly, our *Life*.

Firstly: To glance at our *Position*. We are not asked whether or no we would come into the world. Hence Job exclaimed: "Why didst Thou bring me forth out of the womb?" Job x. 18. No; we are not asked to live, or whether we would live; and, endowed with life, we are not masters of that life—for a trifle can take it from us. Nor are we consulted as to whether or no we would die. Of our death we shall never know the time, the place, nor the manner. True, our liberty goes as far as suicide, but this, instead of delivering us from the mystery that surrounds us, only precipitates us into a chaos of evil altogether beyond conception, and infinitely greater than that from which we would seek to escape. From the cradle to the coffin we occupy space which others have held before us, and which others again will tenant after our death; a space which owns some other master, at Whose will we pass through our own tenancy like babes rocking all involuntarily in their mothers' lap. Such, brethren, is our destiny, our *Position*, here below; to come when we are called, and without any volition of our own; and to leave, ignorant alike of the time, the manner, and the place, solely at the good pleasure of God for the *how*, *when*, *where*, and *why*, of His absolute summons. And do you ask, Why this dependence on God's will? Simply because, being His creatures, we are, by consequence, subject to Him, our Creator. Hence our *Position* is that of perpetual submission.

Secondly. Our *Acts*. Said a very learned man, "Man is always falling, and God is ever raising him up." There is, in all the works which we essay, an element of imperfection which prevents our carrying anything to perfection; and as the arts and

sciences progress this imperfection becomes only the more perceptible. Man can sow the earth and plant the tree, but cannot afterwards control the rain and the sun, nor can he command the seed to germinate, nor the tree to bear fruit For this the hand of God is ever indispensable. In everything we do, whether it be in science, in commerce, in industry, or in politics, there is always something left to be foreseen, even after everything has been provided for; always something left to be done, even after everything has been accomplished. Then, too, there is one element over which neither we ourselves, nor anything we can do, has any power whatever. For the materialists, this element is *Chance*, *Fate*, call it what they will; for religion, it is *Providence*. But religion and unbelief both agree in this incontrovertible fact, that in every manifestation of genius, in every situation of life, in science and in art, man must, since his work is undeniably imperfect, confess his impotence. Thus, with all his pride, man cannot but acknowledge that no event of his life depends entirely upon himself, that neither the present nor the future is within his power—a fact proved by the adage, "Man proposes but God disposes." Man is ever at work, but it is God alone Who gives efficacy to it. "But see," it is said, "what man is to-day, and compare it with what he was!" Well, despite of scientific progress, it is essentially true that God gives the efficacy to man's efforts. Science has discovered the intrinsic and potential value of matter, but the mysterious powers of nature will yield us no obedience unless we bend to them. When I see the railway train drawn by the mighty force of steam, at the will of the living entity on the locomotive, dashing along on its iron way, man, indeed, appears sublime. How the ingenious

disposal of wheels, cylinders, piston-rods, cogs, and all that goes to make up the harmonious potentiality of the engine, fills me with admiration! "Wonderful! Here is progress! Time was when it took many days to traverse the distance now performed in a few hours. Truly man shows himself here as the king of creation." So speaks materialism. Well, true, man *is* the king of creation, albeit *not an absolute* monarch. And let him be careful to observe each and every natural law involved, or else his "subject," the boiler, will burst and fly to pieces, and its "king" perish with it. It is evidenced on every side that man can *guide*, or *direct*, the laws of nature, but disobey or violate them never. A king, man certainly is, but a king entirely dependent on God. Hence we are ever obliged to humble ourselves to God and the altar.

But, since we live in an age when pride rules on every side, when sophism after sophism is invented to beguile youth and mislead the unhappy people, permit me to insist somewhat more on this point, and to make some comparison between the acts of God and those of man. His works do not resemble man's, but differ from them essentially. Man's works survive him, and, once finished as far as finality be possible to them, they at once become as independent of their authors for existence and preservation as their matter was before they touched it. Before the building came into being there existed its materials and the tools for working them up into the architect's ideal; before the picture had any existence there were the necessary materials, brushes, colours, and the rest; while the bronze or the marble had being before the production of the statue. But, the building, the picture, the statue being finished, in course of

time their authors die. Yet their works still live, because independent of them.

For example, Sanzio has passed away, but the Vatican is yet intact, and his divine frescos beautifying its walls still remain there, witnesses of the genius and worth of the artist. Buonarroti also has long since gone from among us, but not so his inimitable works. Both Rome and Florence jealously guard the masterpieces of these departed spirits, whose names lend glory to our country. But with the works of God it is different. We cannot say that after completing the work of creation, He disappeared from our earth and transported His omnipotent hand to other spheres. For, indeed, where could He have gone? God, the immensity of Whose omnipresence necessarily fills *all* space, how could He have vacated *any* portion of it? In such a case He would have to be, and not to be, in one place at the same time—which is mathematically impossible. However, it is not alone the omnipresence of God which renders separation from Him impossible. But there is another reason also, and it is this: the imperative need we have of God for the maintenance of our life, to save us from annihilation.

But while still dwelling on the work of God, this leads us to our third consideration, that of our life, which is God's chief work.

Thirdly. Our *Life*. In order that we *ourselves* should preserve our life, the faculty of self-preservation would evidently be necessary. But that faculty we do not possess. Secondary causes are ever dependent on their first cause, deprived of which they necessarily perish. See that little rivulet tracing its silvery way down the mountain side. But dam the lake, its primary cause, and the stream, no longer fed, will cease to exist. So,

too, with us. Were withdrawal from God possible and effected, man would return to his original nothingness; therefore the faculty of preservation resides not in ourselves, but in God, our first cause, from whom alone we derive whatever we at any and every time possess, so that our very entity is solely and continuously the fruit of His benignity. Just as the shadow moving round the sun-dial depends for its being on the sun, so we exist day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment —dependent each and every instant of our lives on a fresh act of creation by God, for, as St. Ignatius says, "each moment we exist is a fresh present of life, a continuation of the act of creation on the part of God" (*cf.* "Manresa," p. 24, par. 5). Thus we have an ever-abiding necessity for our first cause, God, in Whom "we live, and move, and are." (Acts xvii. 28). And St. Augustine has likened the Divine Presence to the waters of the ocean around and in a sponge, so that on every side and in its most hidden recesses, the sponge is, as it were, absorbed into the presence of the water; and then he tells us that even this comparison is but a faint shadow of the reality of the Divine Presence with us, for that God, being most simple, is infinitely more closely united to man than is the case with these finite and material figures. As the gamut is the nothingness of music, as obscurity is the nothingness of light, so is man, *per se*, the nothingness of existence. Without God his life would be an abstraction; his senses would refuse their offices. Without God there would be no more thought, intelligence, vigour, activity. Without God we could not preserve what we have. For this the soul is essential. But the soul we hold from God, its primary cause. God, therefore, is absolutely and indispensably necessary to us. As it is not darkness that creates the living flame of light, as it is not silence that

awakens and prolongs those ravishing melodies that fill us with delight as the voice of the artist wanders over the gamut, so neither is it nothingness that gives life to man, nor can the creature be conserved but by a perpetual recreative act of Him Who first gave it life. If vocal sounds could be independent of the singer, or the light-giving flame have no need of the fire, then, *but not till then*, could the creature be independent of its Creator, man of God. But, however, in such a case the creature would find in itself the reason of its own entity, would be essential, an infinite being, in fact, would have become as God—a ridiculous conclusion. And it will not suffice, in order to escape from it, to say that God has given man the principle of self-conservation. To do so would merely prove ignorance on the part of the respondent No; God does not part from His creature, for, as St. Paul wrote, "it is in Him we live and move and are" (Acts xvii. 28). God being our first cause, we have perpetual need of Him. But they would subject man to natural powers perhaps? Well, these must necessarily result from something either created or increate. If they admit the former proposition, and yet would do without God, then they scorn, while at the same time they profess, the existence of God, on Whom, as their first cause, all creatures depend; while if, on the other hand, they choose the latter alternative, and say that these powers result from something increate, then these powers, because they depend on the increate, depend on God, Who alone is, Who alone was ever said to be, increate; and it is, as the Prophet wrote, "Dextera Domini fecit virtutem" (Ps. cxvii. 16).

But, leaving the arguments of philosophy, nothing can be clearer than that man has *not* the faculty of self-preservation. I have shown

that our position is one of continual submission. And the conditions of our tenure of life confirm it. Just consider what a trifle is enough to cause death. A draught of air, a cold, and all is over. A poisonous prick, a microbe, and then disease and death. Nor is our relationship to vegetable and animal life less dependent, for they either nourish and assist, or poison and destroy us, as the case may be. The least disorder may prove our ruin, the fury of the seas and of the elements be our destruction. Or, again, were only the gaseous water withdrawn from the air, life would become impossible; there would be no more greenery, no flowers, no woods, no animals, while mankind would kill each other with all the ferocity of famine, and in less than one week our wretched planet, mute, unpeopled, would present only the spectacle of a vast and tinted calcareous mass revolving round the sun. In short, nothing is more obviously true than the incontrovertible fact that the forces of nature, with her mysterious powers, will yield us no obedience unless we bend to them.

God, then, after having harmonized secondary causes, with their respective effects, did not say, "Now I withdraw, for My work is complete." If such were the case, secondary causes would become simple abstraction, and everything would perish. The child who exclaims, "It is God Who has made the flowers and fruits" does not err, for it is in truth, as God Himself has said, from Him that they originate. "I made the earth; and I created man upon it: My hand stretched forth the heavens; and I have commanded all their host" (Isaiah xlv. 12). And it is God, again, Who guides the legions of the heavens, Whose powerful hand gives being to everything that has weight, number, measure. It is God Who causes the flower to

blossom, the seed to germinate, the blood to course through the veins. And on each and every of His works He has stamped the indelible impress of His seal. Only observe this seal and listen to how unmistakably it proclaims, everything sings His glory, "coeli enarrant gloriam Dei" (Psalm xviii. 1). In one word, if I may be allowed the bold metaphor, creation is a perennial Epic, a never-ending Canticle, and God Himself is the Great Master of the poem, of this ravishing Cantata. For we may regard the Creator as a famous musician, under the touch of Whose hand chaos is transformed into the harmonic beauties of an orchestra whose instruments have each creature as a note, the sound of which continues just so long as the key is held down by the finger of God. Thus everything that has been created is maintained by God, Who allots to each his part in the great action of creation. He offers us His hand, and we stand, but were He to withdraw it we should be reduced to our original nothingness.

Behold, then, the destiny of man and of every created thing, from the star to the flower, from the worm to the celestial cherub.

Here is the Creator, there His creature: here is God, there man! Behold our very nothingness as it stands in the awful presence of God, Who is everything: our weak and finite understanding as it pales before the immensity, nay, the infinitude of God's. See, then, what a very speck is our life.

And now, what conclusions can we draw from all this? On which side do we recognize rights, and on which duties? Can we, being effect, repel and leave our cause? Can a ray of light proceed otherwise than from the centre from which it

emanates? No; because in isolation it would find certain destruction, because such independence would lead to inevitable ruin. So, too, it happens to the man who despises the primitive law of his existence. When man withdraws from the source of light and life he must of necessity grope in the dark till, encountering death, all ends in ruin. Impartial history will eternize not only his cry of revolution, but also the wail of his consequent ruin consummated.

In the law of the "Rights of Property" there is a theory, redolent of poetry and eloquence, that finds expression in the axiom that "the very property itself calls for its master," and, so to speak, rebels against usurpation, however carefully it may have been hidden and conducted. Hence a master has a sacred and inalienable right over the substance of his property.

Well, brethren, all creatures belong to God, and if there be any capable of making no protest against whomsoever endeavours to tear them from their Master, there are others who have heart and conscience, and who press forward to assert as their first obligation a reverence for the Creator, and their chief glory the fulfilment of His most holy will. Should such conduct, however, be a source of dissatisfaction to us to pursue, should to obey and respect God cost us too much, then we must no longer continue to enjoy the light of His sun. For, if we wish to make gods of ourselves, let us create our own world, and not set ourselves up as masters of one which we have not created. But we, in our infinite littleness, could we ever succeed in so sublime a work? No, never! If then, we are incapable of playing the part of creator, let us at once hasten to pay tribute to God, the sole Creator, by freely offering Him our soul and our whole life.

God is the omnipotent Lord of all ages, and there has never been a century devoid of His inspiration, not one but has held fast by faith in an infinite and divine operation. In our own time this divine operation, though it exists, is hidden under the veil of modern errors kept out of sight by seductive names of Nature, Science, Equality, Progress, Liberty, and Fraternity, which without perceiving our idolatry we honour as idols.

Behold the language that marks the times. It embodies sublime ideas that fascinate the mind, noble aspirations that touch the heart. But this, in perfection, is the language of God; and all these now perverted forces that convulse and fret society must needs be gathered together, purified and dedicated to Him, to God, Who is their source, on the front of Whose altar a mistaken age would still carve, as of old on that at Athens, "*Deo ignoto*" (Acts xvii. 23).

Such is the present tendency. But, oh, brethren of this our nineteenth century, allow me to speak to you of God, to tell you, with St. Paul, that the God whom "you worship without knowing . . . I preach to you" (*Ibid.*)

If you will carefully observe all your idols, and you have six, it will be evident that they must all bow down in adoration before God. Let us consider, then, singly these idols of Honour, Nature, Reason, Science, Equality, and Progress:—

(*a*) Honour.—Granted that a man possesses the instinct of honour, yet it must not be overlooked that that honour alone is praiseworthy which is pure and stable; whereas purity and stability are wanting to that so-called honour which does not impel the rendering to God of that which belongs to Him.

(*b*) Nature.—Anatomy has thrown light into Nature's most hidden recesses, while its most intricate and admirable secrets have been discovered. Nature, however, is not a cause, but an *effect;* and it is but the latter, not the former, that you have discovered. But if the effect be beautiful, splendid, and divine, then how still more beautiful, splendid, and divine, must be their cause, He who created so many transcendent beauties before your very eyes.

(*c*) Reason.—Without God reason is but superstition. Indeed, does not its voice whisper to you that you must thank God for it, God whose largess it is? To deny God but revere reason is, in effect, to violate your reason itself; and to deny this consequence would be to deny reason (*cf.* "Manresa," p. 25).

(*d*) Science.—Though incomplete it yet swells with pride; and since you do not direct it to its necessary end, which is God, it can never carry you upward to Him. Bacon has very truly said:—"With a little science you separate from God, but with much you draw near to Him."

(*e*) Liberty.—This is a high-sounding cry, and one which we also raise with you. You desire the era of liberty, but Jesus has willed it before you; and I, inspired by Jesus, tell you with all my heart and soul that what you need is really *a little more science to have a little more truth, and a little more truth to have a little more liberty.*

(*f*) Equality.—But, before Jesus, where was equality? Where was the equality that regards us all as sons of a common Father? Where the equality in the sight of God who in the person of the God-man sacrificed Himself for the salvation of all men equally? Where the equality maintained by our common mother, the Church, through which we derive the graces and hope of

salvation? Find if you can a more perfect sign of equality than the cross of Jesus Christ!

(*g*) Progress.—That alone is real progress which is not in opposition to God's truth, which accomplishes His holy will. But separate progress from God and you will end in superstition. In a word, to do away with God is to do away with progress.

Believe me, to make our world, to make society, monarchies, families, gold is not enough! Rest assured that the altar always was and always will be the foundation-stone of any and every society, past, present, and future. It is absolutely necessary that you be convinced of this one thing, most clearly demonstrated by history, that if we would achieve the social happiness of mankind these, your idols, Science, Honour, and the rest, are wholly inadequate to the task. Above them all, and above everything, we must reverence and worship the holy name of God.

To pretend to glory without God is to send our youth to shed their blood in no noble cause; to pretend to science apart from God is simply to dig its grave; to affect industrial reform and exclude God is to reduce man to the level of brute beasts, who have neither rights nor duties; to make a pretence of Art without God is to place the musician on a par with a piece of creaking machinery that collapses and falls to pieces. It is, indeed, the veriest illusion to seek liberty, equality, and fraternity without God, for it means the abandonment of our most tangible and sacred possession, our human rights. You call it *liberty*, forsooth, when loaded with the iron manacles they rivet about you; *fraternity* when the knife gleams before your eyes, at your very throat? *equality*

when you are seized by the stronger, trodden under foot, and treated as chattels!

The present century is marked by two distinct movements; by one we may soar on the wings of faith and love to the Infinite God, while by the other we may rush headlong, debased by doubt, hatred, and despair, down to bottomless perdition. Thus are we invoked by the language of falsehood and of truth; but it is the latter which predicates that God, who dwells in the realms of liberty and justice, wills justice and liberty for all; that it is God who gives light to the understanding, but Who has no cause for apprehension in your using it to consult *nature*; that, finally, it is God who guides you into the paths of true wisdom, but without the least shadow of fear in your using it to search into and analyze the mysteries of creation. Nay, I tell you more, and do so, too, in the name of God, that by so much the more as we advance in truth and justice the more elevated will be our sense of honour, the more enlightened our understanding, and, moreover, that only in that incomparable light that emanates from religion can we hope to understand the wonders of Creation, the secrets of Nature. "May our century," as said De Maistre, "which began by proclaiming the rights of man, end by confessing those of God," and may we with all our strength unite in singing His praises.

But talking of duties and rights, what are the rights of God, and what are the duties of man? Well, it will simplify the question to ascertain first what are the duties we do *not* owe to God; what are the rights that do *not* belong to Him. Is there anything that God cannot do in our regard? Is there anything that we can refuse Him? Decidedly not, my brethren. It is His to demand of us whatsoever and everything that we

have, for it is from Him alone that we have it. Hence also it is our bounden duty to yield it at His will. As many as are His *benefits*, so many are His *rights*. Whatever He may demand of us it is only what He Himself gave us to hold at His pleasure. First, then, it is God Who has given us *understanding*, an intelligence that is a reflex of His Own. He has, therefore, an inalienable right over it and to require us to use it according to His Will; that is, as the instrument of belief in Him. It is God, again, Who has given us *will*. This He gave us in order that by it we might obey His laws. He has, therefore, a perfect right to its control, and hence our obligation to conform to His laws. Moreover, it is God Who has given us *entity, life;* it is God who preserves and develops it. He has, therefore, an absolute right over us at every moment of our existence—in childhood, youth, old age—from our first breath to our last. And not only is all this true, but it is God Who has created also every creature that is, between which and ourselves He has ordained certain relations. Thus God has an immutable right over all creatures, and not only over all other creatures as well as man, but also over our mutual relations to all other creatures and among ourselves. To deny these rights is to deny God, to deny His creation, or to deny our very reason itself; and that creature who lays claims to the rights of creator can be regarded only as a usurper. But besides this, God, as the source or fount of all authority, has the incontestable right of establishing that of the family, of a nation, of religion; in which vicariates a ray of the divine authority itself is reflected. Hence our duty to respect and obey them.

But see that man with eyes raised to heaven, his hand on his breast, and full of self-assurance,

exclaiming: "I am an honest man." Well, but *why* this solemn and tranquil declaration? Hear the answer. "I have neither murdered nor robbed; I have never injured my neighbour either in his honour or in his goods, nor have I ever coveted his possessions. I am, therefore, an honest man." But, my brethren, this is not enough. The truly honest man yields to everyone that which belongs to him, gives to all their due. Should you refuse to render to God that which you ought to render Him, and thus violate the most sacred of all rights, what will it avail you to have abstained from injustice to man? By acting in such a way you would give men just ground for believing that were you not held in check through fear of the law you would have no hesitation in stripping them of their honour, seizing their goods and robbing them of even their life itself. The rights of man are inseparable from those of God. In fact, Divine and human rights are so indissolubly connected that were we to sever the supernatural tie that joins them we should simply destroy at one blow all human rights whatsoever, those of the individual, those of the family, and those of nations. For what guarantee would there be for the rights of individuals, for the rights of private property, for liberty, did not conscience impose their respect? And, indeed, what authority legislative, judicial. or coercive, could possibly exist were God, its only basis, to be withdrawn from it?

The authority of man is inferior only to that of God, Who alone gives it sanction and authority. But divine sanction and authority being withdrawn, by what right, O man, wilt thou who art now invested with authority from God then command others? Will you resort to force? But this would be tyrannical, and tyranny is short-

lived. Ah, then, genius, perhaps? But this requires proof, a no easy thing. Others, whose rival claims may be admitted before yours, may come forward. But, perchance, you will rely on universal suffrage? Think well on't. Mere numbers cannot enforce authority.

We must conclude, then, that human authority rests of necessity on that of God. Yet there are men who pretend to annul every right of God, who endeavour to ravish the people of their faith in Him, and to teach them to trample His laws under foot. Nevertheless, these at the same time maintain that liberty and the rights of life and of property, the mere possession of which last would be an outrage, are to be respected. But, my brethren, is all this serious? The mass of people who labour, who drag a weary life through toil, misery, and bitter suffering, will they be persuaded, convinced by the hollow maxims of humanitarian philosophy and visionary economics? Will this toiling and suffering multitude be consoled by the hope of the infinite void of a future nothingness, which is all that is offered them as their only hope of happiness and comfort, the inevitable end of a laborious and joyless life.

Oh, from my heart I pity that nation, whatever may be its form of government, where for the guardianship of its own and the people's rights the executive relies but on force. Woe to the family if in its bosom the Name of God is without fear, without reverence. Woe, above all, to that people in whose State the rights of God are ignored. For when these are no longer held sacred there is left to us nothing but despotism and slavery. Let me impress on you those memorable words, worthy of being carved everywhere in indelible characters, of a recent writer, Louis Blanc, in his "History of the Ten Years:" "*That*

which we take from the sovereignty of God we add to that of the Despot." Thus when a State ignores the sovereign power of God, despotism and brute force step in to replace it. Tell me, have you followed me? Have I succeeded in making it plain to you who are attached to the poor people, who love your own and their rights and liberty, to you above all who wish, and because they look up to you for it, are called upon to guard their rights and liberty? Place this liberty, these rights under the protection of God's rights, for herein is your only defence. In this way alone will you be able to succeed in your efforts for the people's good. But ignore God's rights, and you will most certainly end in that which is most abhorred, execrated, and cursed by all, in Tyranny.

IX.

THE NECESSITY OF RELIGION.

We have seen that God exists; we have seen that the soul exists. Let us now see if there be not some tie, some relation, some affinity between them.

If man does not admit the truth and the duty of his religious tendencies he cannot use his moral and intellectual faculties, for religion will not allow us to contemplate all the various and multiform marvels of the physical and social worlds without at the same time feeling the necessity of rising to the prime and beneficent cause of all. Could one possibly view the sun rising to give light and life to our globe, and not admire the power that created and the wisdom that guides it?

Man is, by his own proper nature, religious, for were he not to admit the existence of a prime cause, which he cannot acknowledge without also loading it with benedictions and invoking it at every turn, he would be a being devoid of understanding.

St. Augustine wrote: "O, God, Thou hast

made us for Thyself, and our heart is disquieted until it repose in Thee." But his words are despised and rejected, for neither God nor religion is admitted.

Yes, God and Religion are banished from the understanding of some, because they are given up to pleasure or consumed by self-interest; banished from others because, according to them, God was a splendid, but fallacious, scientific invention of the Middle Ages, an untenable hypothesis in the light of modern science, which teaches that matter is immutable. In those times religion, they say was a wisely-constituted Theocracy, but God is now a forbidden word, of which we must rid ourselves, while His religion is a superstitious and ignorant obscurantism, a mere human concept, without which we can live just as we please, free from all trammels of dependence.

Instead of all this, however, the contrary is true! It is impossible to live without religion, for existence void of religion would be full of perversity and injustice.

Since it is of the greatest importance to give the alarm to our poor youth and to the people against this now prevailing error, this infernal miasma, which strives to asphyxiate society, I will speak to-day upon this most important subject.

Let us, then, see whether it be possible to live without Religion.

First of all, what is Religion? It is the compendium of the relations that unite man to God, of the truths that join finite man to the infinite Eternal; it is the law of morality, it is the fire of worship, it is the creature's instinctive sentiment of gratitude and adoration towards the Creator.

This is religion. The question is, then, whether or no it be possible to live without all this, without religion. But the inmost voice of our soul distinctly answers, No.

Seek where you may, you will never succeed in meeting with a people devoid of faith, worship, morality. You will find some isolated, perverted creature, who has flung from his lips the horrible blasphemy that between earth and heaven there is no sort of tie whatsoever, but this dire, this calamitous cry is overcome by heavenward strains of the universal hymn of praise and benediction. In all epochs, amongst every people, from the peasant's humble cottage to the imperial palace, among barbarians as among the most civilized peoples, amidst the splendour of progress as in the obscurity of barbarism, you always meet with altars, sacrifice, prayer. And it is further observable that even when science, art, and civilization have dropped out of the life of a people, yet has religion never left her home in their hearts. With every nation it has formed the principal basis of society, and wherever there is a record of man there is also a record of religion. And look where we may, the same truth forces itself on our notice. Religion overlies and moulds the whole range of thought throughout the Oriental, Grecian, Roman, and Christian worlds.

In the Old and New Testaments man is represented as an exile who longs for his native land, as a son who longs to see his father. In ancient Greek and Roman life, those kings among men, with their philosophers, orators, consuls, senators, poets, artists, one and all declare that religion is the corner stone of social order, the condition of the very existence of glory, while their eventful histories, and their masterpieces of art, ever speak to you of God.

Go where we will, we meet everywhere with men full of reverence for the altar, who have a burning desire for God, who long for Him, who cannot live without Him. Therefore, religion is an indispensable condition of humanity. Thus far the voice of history. Let us now seek the answer of philosophy.

Atheists themselves, with Voltaire as their chief, declare that the maxim, that denies the necessity of religion, is absurd. Were atheism true we could live without religion. But if there be a God Who has given us life, Who preserves us, Who sustains us with His providence, how can we fail to recognize it and be grateful to Him? If there exist such a God, Who also commands us to do good, and forbids evil, ought we not to obey His sacred laws? If there be this God, Who will judge us after this life is over, Who will mete out to the just their reward, and to the evil their punishment, ought we not to be prepared to appear before His tribunal?

Man, according to reason, depends every instant on the will of his Creator, and is obliged to acknowledge this dependence by the offering of his mind, his heart, his will, and his whole self as an oblation to his sovereign Lord. And let it not be objected that because God is most blessed in Himself He has therefore no need for our adoration, for, though the premise be true, yet the conclusion is false, for God would cease to be God could He help compelling the creature to offer Him this adoration. God is the basis of order, which is found in the submission of the creature to the Creator, for, as creatures are entirely relative to the Creator, so they must refer and defer to Him in a manner conformable to their nature.

Those deficient in intellect are conducted to God by destiny; those endowed with understand-

ing go to Him on the wings of affection and faith. Thus it is that, if we admit creation, religion becomes indispensable. It began to rule over men in the person of the first, and will cease to do so only in that of the last, of our species. It is, indeed, inevitable, and even if no one would recognise and sanction it, yet would it continue to impose itself on mankind, of whom it is the prime reason, for God is at once the object of religion and our objective happiness. Thus religion itself is a condition of human happiness, of that happiness which causes the heart to beat, and which we all desire at every moment.

Indeed, upon what does human happiness depend but on the increased perfection of our faculties? And to this end is religion necessary, not only as a law and condition of happiness, but also because it forms our grandeur.

How grand and sublime is the idea of man as portrayed by religion! Called out of nothingness by the power of God's word, and longing to return to Him, he looks forward with a confident hope of one day possessing the Infinite. Such is the destiny of man as taught by religion, and the Holy Scriptures affirm that no words would suffice to describe the grandeur and beauty of our promised home in the infinite realms of eternity.

But what is life when wanting in the light of faith? Can it be restricted to being born, to suffering, weeping, perhaps to rising a little, and making some noise in the world, to an abiding anxiety, ending in the grave of eternal nothingness? This, surely, could not be called *life*, but only irony, and under such an hypothesis the brute, inasmuch as it suffers no remorse, would be happier than man.

But it is not so. We have the faculty of thought and our understanding, taking the measure

of this world, finds it all too narrow, while we have also the faculty of religion, which unites us with the Divinity. And, after all, do we think only for the sake of thinking? The stone needs not to think to exist, nor do plants nor animals. Why, then, should we have received this dower? Says the modern philospher, Because it distinguishes us from all other entities. But I answer him that this dower, without an ultimate end, would be a useless one, and would serve only to let us apprehend an impotent littleness in comparison with all other entities, inasmuch as it would show the inequality between the reality and our ideal, the latter being, as shown above, a creation peculiar to the human soul, so that we should have to envy the destiny of the brute, the ox patiently tracing the furrow, the swallow saluting the dawn of day, who suffer no remorse for the past, no anxiety for the present, no terror for the future. Thus there would be greater happiness in a flower than within the soul of man endowed with reason.

Moreover, religion fortifies man and renders him invincible, inasmuch as it inspires him with the sentiment of resistance to every tyranny. It was nothing but religion that made one writer say, "I fear God, but have no other fear," and another, "When potentates and princes command what is morally wrong, we sacrifice our head, but do not obey." Aristotle says: "A man who fears not God is not a man of courage, but infirm of soul; for just as he is not courageous who fears everything, so neither is he courageous who fears nothing, not even the Divinity." And Bacon also said: "That as a dog is bolder when near its master, because it feels that it is supported by the strength of a superior nature, so is the man who has faith in God bolder than he who is devoid of faith."

Until gorillas, from whom certain professors would trace our descent, can be shown to have written an "Æneid," an "Iliad," a "Divina Commedia," I shall continue to refuse to recognize such ancestors. Though now in the midst of the nineteenth century, these professors are really less advanced than the world in the days of Methuselah.

But when man raises his head saying, "*O, God, my Father!*" and when God answers him, "*My son,*" then no one dare to affirm that he is but the equal of the brutes, and the world must needs bow, adore, and pray. Behold, then, man prostrate in the presence of God, who thus appears as He is, the true King of all creation. Why, then, do we lower our gaze, and, by believing in nothing, rob the brutes of that their special prerogative?

A young man, just returned from a foreign capital, finding himself at a social gathering, began to make explicit declarations of atheism, but, hearing neither approval nor echo of any kind, exclaimed—"How is this? Are you, perchance, amongst those imbeciles who submit to the influence of priests, the masters of ignorance?" "I beg your pardon," answered the lady of the house, "there are in this mansion two beings of the same opinion as yourself, without, however, having ever been to Paris to study." "And who are they?" "They are my dog and my horse, which at least have the modesty not to express such ideas and boast of them."

In truth, science clearly demonstrates that man is man *because* he is religious, and that he who lives without religion is really a monster of humanity.

What, in fact, is justice? It is that virtue which demands that his own be given to everyone. Hence, sons who fail to recognize the debt con-

tracted to their parents, who gave them everything, are inhuman and unjust, because in contradiction to the instincts of the heart.

Besides this, absence of religion creates a sad and sorrowful void in the human heart. Without religion the light of understanding is extinguished, the scope of existence is defective, and man is reduced to nothing, to desperation, for if faith in the future be wanting there is nothing to lighten the pains and griefs of the present.

Those void of religion have no peace in their heart, because they are far from God: no satisfaction in science, no halo of glory, but an insatiable and tormenting craving for happiness. The brutal pleasures to which they resort being unable to satisfy them, their existence is but an anticipation of hell.

To the man without religion there is nothing left to fix the intellect. For years and years, perhaps until the grave, he hides the doubt that torments him. And then comes the bitter waking in an eternity that dissipates, too late, his fatal illusions. Believe me, it is the very anguish of our spirit which specially proves the necessity of religion. When doubt arises, and is harboured, it develops and spreads, then stings and becomes terrible in its lacerating fruits. Having doubted God, man doubts himself: his heart becomes a desert, virtue is lost, and at every step terrible and unanswerable questions concerning God and man present themselves to add to his misery. Far from God, genius falls to the dust, and tranquility and joy are lost. Sweet and cherished ideals, hopes full of delight, all fly like a flock of frightened little birds before the hawk, from the soul that has lost religion and faith. Then follow melancholy and distress unspeakable.

One of these misled young men used to say to

his friends: "I should not know that I lived, but for the agonizing distress that devours me." And Ugo Foscolo wrote: *I was happier when I believed in God.*

When void of religion not only do the heart and soul suffer, but we enjoy no comfort at all.

Take the man who has been successful in everything, to whom nothing has ever been wanting, and hear the echo of his desolate heart as he says: *I am seventy years old, and now nothing is left me but death.* There, again, is a woman who has lived without religion. She made a splendid figure in the world, but now she too exclaims: *I am old, and behold there is only left to me death.*

What, then, is the end of life without the splendour of religion?

Pleasures fade away, like flowers in early autumn, as the snow that melts in the rays of the genial sun, and in their room there remain but trifles and illusions.

Picture to yourselves a man with an only son, at once his pride and support, but snatched from him by inexorable Death. If he have no religion, all around him becomes a desert. He asks, "Where has he gone?" and, looking down into the bottom of the grave, sees only a little dust and ashes. He interrogates every doctrine, questions heaven and earth, gazes into the future, but for answer he has only, *Perhaps.* Who will be able to paint this father's martyrdom, the torments and anguish of his mind, the lacerations of his heart? His weary soul abandons itself to earth; vehemently it embraces matter, and longs to become matter itself. But futile are its aspirations. Then the man's noble human instincts raise him; remembrance of the past, calculations of the future, remorse, all present themselves before him as so many funeral spectres, and,

terrified, he steps backward, as a child who has trodden on a viper. Oh, blessed is he if now he return to God.

But, alas! there are those who repel the celestial light till the last moment. If, however, they deceive others, they do not deceive themselves, and, under an assumed tranquillity, they bear a torn and bleeding heart, the spirit plunged in a sea of woe that, slowly perhaps, but surely, destroys their life of self-inflicted misery.

Such, brethren, is the spectacle of a man without religion, though even this terrible picture falls below the reality. Byron describes him as a poor shipwrecked sailor, at the mercy of the surging billows, and whose only food is the hard and pitiless rocks; or as a wretched wanderer, lost in a boundless and arid desert, who has the sand for his only sustenance. And now, hark to the sighs of this poor and miserable man without religion, as he says: *I am indeed unhappy; I have lost God, and have no hope, even here below.* Thus his only hymns are those of doubt and despair. Fatality is his god; his heaven is an iron heaven, to which the groans of the soul are uselessly raised; while his voice is a compound of imprecations, of groans, of sufferings, and of despair, that impels some to brutalize themselves, and others to suicide.

And now, brethren, allow me to tell you, in a few words, "The Story of the Orphan Girls of Padre Agostino," as they are called, as *àpropos* of the necessity of religion.

One day, when at Viareggio for my health, I happened to hear that the distressed family of a deceased clerk lay in a state of the utmost poverty. I easily induced a devoted lady to get up a sub-

scription, and with the result I bought bread, flour, and clothing, which I sent to them. But after some time I was told they needed more substantial remedies. I therefore obtained an entry for the mother into a hospital, and on my going to Florence, succeeded in placing her boy in the Institute of Padre Ludovice Da Casoria, and one of the girls, who was gentle, intelligent, good, and affectionate, in the Convent of the Giuseppine. Some time afterwards I was one day advised by telegram that this girl was on the point of death, and, going to her, I arrived in time to receive her last words, and asked the dying girl to pray to God for me. "Always, always," she answered, and then her pure and lovely soul flew heavenward to the bosom of her Creator.

It is, I believe, to her fervent prayers I owe the good fruits of my sermons.

Meanwhile the other sister was also attacked by diphtheria, and, wanting the necessary care, died.

Should anyone like to verify the accuracy of my account, he might address the family, Castagnola, No. 50, Via Larga, Florence.

After that, I went to Arezzo to preach during Lent, and as I was requested to continue my sermons after Easter, I acceded on condition that the result of the collections should be handed over to me; for I had proposed to found an institute for the shelter of as many orphan girls as my means should allow of. I found the first one in Arezzo itself, and carried her away in my arms. Her name was Adalgisa Pelloni, but to those who visited her, out of gratitude to me, she used to say her name was Agostina. One day, while preaching in the Cathedral of Pisa, a telegram announced to me that Adalgisa, struck by an acute malady, was dying. Together with the congregation, I recited an Ave to our Lady for

the poor child, who was saved, as it seemed to me, by a prodigy of God's mercy. By degrees my funds increased, so that I was able to take in more little orphans. I had calculated one thousand francs for each, and had sixteen thousand, when several Florentine ladies held a charity bazaar, and with the result my capital was doubled. After this I bought a house, which I placed under the care of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, and in which there are now about sixty little orphans sheltered, tended, and taught by the self-devoted zeal of those good Religious.

Well, I do not intend to make them nuns, housemaids, nor servants of any kind, but honest, helpful girls, good mothers of families, or Sisters of Charity, able and willing to assist at the bedsides of the sick, and with the wounded on the field of battle. Such is the destiny I propose for the orphans, religion's gifts to a needy world.

Would you believe it? The incredulous himself affirms the necessity of religion, inasmuch as he does not say, "I have no religion," for he knows that by saying so he would descend to the level of the brutes, but he says instead, "I have *my* religion." Yet what must we think of this? Is man, perchance, free to make a religion by his own independent will? If religion be the compendium of the relationship between God and man, then it is based on the nature of both, and must, therefore, either be admitted as such, or denied altogether. But, driven into a corner, the unbelieving man will tell you that he means to say, "I take from religion that which pleases, and reject that which does not please me." This system may be a very comfortable one, but you will admit that there would, in this case, be as

many religions as there are heads. Suppose a citizen were to go to the middle of the Piazza and cry, "Down with the laws of the State! I want the laws to please me—the others are made for fools!" What would you think of him? And what of the conscript who should say to his officers, "Leave me in peace; I mean to serve the country in my own fashion?" On the same principle the thief would be right to answer the policeman, "You must let me do it, for my religion is to wish for, and to obtain, other people's property."

Now, although this language is not only erroneous, but absurd, yet it distinctly supports our assertion; it proves that man always feels the *necessity* of religion. And this need demonstrates itself in an especial manner in adversity, inasmuch as it shakes off indifference, banishes illusions, and inspires the hope of a better and an eternal life by awakening in the soul the voice of God. Thus the soul that in time of prosperity was separated from God, in that of misfortune rejoins Him.

Between religion and death, then, there exists an harmonious relationship, inasmuch as death, with religion, has no terror, while without it, death becomes simply ruin. It would seem that, as by degrees one nears the grave, there issues from it a funereal light that dispels the obscurity of error and banishes prejudice. From the remotest dawn of Christianity to the present, no Catholic has ever been known to refuse belief in religion at the point of death, but on the contrary, as soon as the voice of interest ceases, and the stimulus of passion changes the desires of the perverted man, then the terror of an infinite future torments him, and impels him to turn to Jesus Christ on the Cross, Who, with arms ever

outstretched to receive the penitent, opens wide, as his only refuge, His own Sacred and bleeding Heart, the altar of redemption and salvation. And so true is this that the modern philosophers, apostles of positivism, materialism, and so-called progress, have all returned and given in their allegiance to religion, with the exception of Voltaire and Diderot, who, however, failed to do so, simply because their pillows were vigilantly guarded by "friends," in order that the dying men should not commit the same weakness as all their comrades in unbelief!

Nowadays, a sort of association even has been formed, under the name of the "Society of Insurance against God," the object of which is to surround the death-bed of the poor agonizing man who has renounced religion, and prevent him to the last from returning to God. But these acts of violence are distinctly offences both against human liberty, of which they talk so glibly, but appear to have no conception, and against the anguish of a sorrowing family.

Let us, however, comfort ourselves by the thought that, at the approach of death, error and prejudice fall like curtains from before the eyes, and faith leaps up into a living flame, for the soul now, above all times, feels the absolute necessity of believing in God, and, as we may say, even holds to Him, Who then graciously assuages the pains of the dying wanderer, holds out to him the divine anchor of hope, and shows him the gates of heaven, flung open to receive his penitent soul, for Infinite Love is ever ready to pardon, even though at the last moment. It is this thought, brethren, that consoles me when I hear of some poor, unhappy creature dying without the consolation of religion. A few madmen may have succeeded in withholding him from these, but they

could not prevent him from responding to a flash of the light of divine grace, the gift of Mercy to that poor soul on the brink of eternity. Then, perhaps, a last faint sigh of repentance, of contrition, may have reached the all-merciful God, and the soul so nearly lost is safe.

Well, my brethren, if at present far off from religion, let us not delay our return another moment, for death may overtake us all unexpectedly, but rather let us, fearless of human respect, yield our souls at once to Jesus Christ crucified. Then, under the influence of our holy religion, we shall assuredly enjoy the calm and delights that it confers, even in this rugged world, and their crowning fruition in a glorious and perfect eternity.

X.

FAMILY LIFE AND RELIGION.

THERE is one institution peculiar to humanity which, after religion, is certainly the dearest, the sweetest, and most fascinating of all; I mean *Family Life.*

Yesterday I shewed you that *man* cannot live without religion, and to-day I propose to demonstrate that it is necessary to the *Family* also, to the hearth around which are gathered all the most cherished and sacred traditions.

The family is the origin of the whole body of society, and therefore of incomparably more consequence than the political life of a State. Family life is to society what the heart is to the body. Indeed, society is so dependent on family life that the advancement or degeneration of the former may be measured by the people's esteem of family life. But now this is lost sight of in favour of visionary social and humanitarian theories. It is entirely forgotten that the family is the life and germ of society, and that it has its source in the cherished depths of the parental heart. The "family" has been described as "the second soul

of humanity"—a fact which legislators pass over when they count the State as a social contract of individual units, whereas it is really based on the elementary community of the family, and afterwards on "the union of septs and villages in a complete and self-sufficient life." This sort of politicians take no account of the family, though, as I shall show you, it is on this that the prosperity of the State depends. Yes, brethren, I repeat, the welfare, of the State depends on our family life, and history abounds with undeniable evidence of this. The prosperity of ancient Rome fluctuated with the integrity of her family life. Respect for parental authority has ever been coexistent with national vigour and power, and in the present day the evident unity of the English nation, with her world-wide extent of empire, is coincident with a respect for the family tie unequalled by any people in modern Europe. This love of his family leads the Englishman to carry his "home" with him wherever he may go. Nor are these coexistent prosperities of State and Family accidental. On the contrary, that of the former is the result of the latter, which is its true cause. In both society and the family we need the same virtues and laws. But education and training take place in the family. Thus the home sows and the State reaps. The State imposes duties, but it is the family which trains to perform them. And what are the virtues that make up the life and soul of the State? Are they not goodness of heart, generosity of character, and a strong and courageous will? These things are not "made to order," as they say, but are the fruits of early and persistent training, and if they exist in men, then they are the result of home training. If the family does not produce such, then neither will the State have any such

at her call; the Fatherland will be without good men. To pretend that the defenders of our country are formed in the barracks or on battlefields is eminently unjust as well as illogical, for education is commenced, and mostly carried out, in the bosom of the family, receiving elsewhere no more, if so much as finishing touches, as one may say. Of what avail would be military drill and manœuvres if the family produced only the weak, and educated a sensual, pleasure-enslaved progeny in pusillanimity? Such youths would prove but traitors to, never defenders of, the country of which they formed the army. Patriotism, an essential of liberty, will never fire the heart of a people devoid of respect for home and family. Patriotism is the love of country, of the land of our forefathers, a devotion to that spot of the earth which, obedient to the destiny of God, first received us. Patriotism calls to mind our earliest home teachings and aspirations, the influence that first gave truth to our minds and the love of goodness to our hearts. See here the source of patriotic affection. He who has no home has no Fatherland, and, by consequence, no patriotism—and then what sort of a soldier will he be?

We will, therefore, turn our thoughts to-day to family life. But what have I to tell you of it? Well, that which I told you yesterday of man, that is, that as he cannot dispense with religion, for it is necessary to him, essential to his proper end, so neither can the family. A family, my brethren, devoid of religion, presents an even still more dismal spectacle than the man without faith, for it is productive of greater misery. Thus my theorem is, that *Religion is necessary to the family*, to the illustration of which I now invite your attention.

Family life has Religion as a necessary foundation. To attempt to erect it on any other foundation would be to build up the most necessary of all institutions on sand, and would infallibly result in compromising all social interests, present and future. We must, therefore, approach the question carefully, as involving all the deepest and best affections of our nature.

Family life may be compared to a reversible shield, with a human and divine aspect. As to the former, the family is the offspring of an entirely free, spontaneous, and uncommanded will in man and woman to unite in married life, the accidental conditions and terms of which are regulated by special laws in connection with the nuptial contract. Public authority takes part in it to sanction the union and to guard the civil status and development of each separate family. But there is also a divine side of the shield, which regards the *moral* union of male and female, which, of two souls, makes one, for the sake of living an undivided life, and for the procreation of offspring to be educated in Christian charity. Hence one moral person is effected from the man and woman through matrimony, which is thus seen to be the most perfect or intimate union. And inasmuch as God ordained and blessed this union between man and woman, so in His will resides the origin, nature, and determination of the relations between father, mother, and children. Thus the principle of family life rests not on the will of man, but on that of God, which is supreme. The Holy Scriptures tell us that God, having, with wonderful power, knowledge, and goodness, created everything for our use, and having crowned all by calling man himself out of nothing, said: "It is not good for man to be alone, let us make him a help" (Gen. ii., 18). And then of His infinite

compassion He gave Eve as a companion to Adam, who said: "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. ii., 23). And God blessed their union, the source of the stream of humanity flowing from generation to generation, the life of which came from and returns to God.

We see here, then, a simple account of both the origin and reason of the family. And I will ask you to note the foundation chosen by God as its basis. Was this base the senses? But these are the inferior part of man, limited in their action, and not lasting. Brutes have senses, but no family. Inasmuch, therefore, as man communicates in the family not only his material life, but also his spiritual, his ideas and virtues, so we must seek the foundation of this divine institution in higher spheres.

Well, then, shall we find it in the understanding? This, however, is a star that would shine, and not only repudiates union, but aspires to isolation. Hence it is altogether unfitted for the purpose of giving life to others, and a life, too, that tends not to contraction, but expansion. No, this ligament will never answer our purpose.

Perhaps, then, the family was founded on interest and pleasure—quicksands on which, unfortunately, so many families are nowadays built, when marriage has become a mere mercantile contract. A man in these days marries her money rather than a woman; he seeks not her virtues, but her dowry, and estimates her value not by the heart, but by her financial status.

Added to this, we have in active operation the perverted and impious theory which maintains that the holy and indissoluble nuptial tie can be broken at the will of these fickle contractors, who thus by divorce open the door to a spurious polygamy, which sacrifices the children's future,

destroys the family, and ruins the country. To assign interest and pleasure, then, as the basis of the family is to prove beyond cavil that God was not thus its founder. But we have seen that God did institute family life. Therefore it is not based on interest and pleasure. No; it is founded on something infinitely purer and sweeter, on the heart, the home of love which can induce us to offer ourselves as an irrevocable holocaust. But if the family comes from the heart it would seem to be an easy thing to form it. At the same time, history tells us that the heart without religion is incapable of forming a family, since the natural affection of the heart is not sufficiently lasting for the achievement of such a work. True, the heart loves, but it does not, by nature, love the same object permanently. It was for this very reason that Civil Law intervened, but was impotent to protect man's heart from its natural inconstancy. Hence insensate legislation has legitimized the polygamy of divorce. Nevertheless, both history and experience proclaim with no uncertain voice that the heart *without religion* can be no basis for the superstructure of family life. Religion is the primary element of happiness, and therefore essential to the family and to be sought by youth in the formation of their homes. Now, however, experience is to count for nothing, for we are told that the home needs not religion. Yet even pagans have felt and acknowledged its necessity, and united the Altar and the Hearth. Nor is this union of altar and home peculiar to any age, people, or religion; but on the contrary, we find it *semper ubique*, for in every age and among every people, the cry "*pro aris et focis*" greets our ears. It is then the altar that must form the foundation of the family. This true principle has been recognized by every false religion, though they

have one and all failed in doing what has been reserved for the true, that is, the arduous task of constituting a good family. Despite, then, the unvarying experience of historical facts, it has been left for these latter days to desire a life without religion and without faith. Oh, wretched people, to establish the family without religion! And now, see the inevitable result on every side: Family discord, tearful homes, love a mere dream of an antiquated past, hatred and strife rampant. In vain you ask yourselves, "Where is now the light that burnt of yore on the hearth, and shed a radiant glow on the life of home?" Ah, my brethren, I will tell you. The light that burned at the happy fire-side was kindled from the altar by the sacred tie of religion, now ruthlessly banished. You have cried only, "pro focis," and cannot, therefore, complain of the tears wept over the ruins consummated there. Throw away faith, banish God from your homes, expel His holy Angels, do away with religion, and what remains? The heart? Yes; but the heart with its weakness, caprices, and storms. The heart needs religion to direct and govern it in its love. Love governs the heart, but religion must govern love. The heart is impulsive. What a trifle can awaken love, even the simplest action, a word or a look can do it. While to annihilate love and turn it into hatred, still less will suffice. Love without religion is a very bubble that the lightest breath will destroy. Nor is this peculiar to weak minds; it is equally true of the strong. Banish religion from your homes, and peace will fly out at the window with it, tranquillity will know you no more, and conjugal fidelity turn its back on you. Natural love is altogether insufficient. Who can flatter himself that he can preserve its flame alive? When young, I know it well, we always

think ourselves beloved. I know also that we crown ourselves with phantasies and roses, and believe we grow up in the midst of love. But I know equally well how small an effort of the intelligence is required to discover how much truth there is in our fond illusions. Where are now those fond affections that awhile ago we declared eternal? Only for a brief span they dwelt in the heart, then fled elsewhere to some other home, which after a short sojourn they abandoned for yet another—and so on, ever changing, never stable. The heart, by natural love, attaches itself to that which is transitory. Thus we must not complain of our heart, for what it loves to-day, to morrow may have no existence, and could not therefore be beloved. Hence it has sometimes happened that the bride of a few days' standing has abandoned the spouse to whom she had but just sworn an eternal affection. Nor has the stronger mind of man been proof against a like inconstancy of heart. Unable to regulate the affections of the heart, we need the guidance and stay of God and religion. Religion defends the nuptial couch from all that is illicit, then gives to love an abiding aliment, and reveals the priceless beauty and worth of a soul unsullied in the eyes of its Creator. This beauty of soul sees all things round it pass, yet itself remains intact, nor ever ages, but is always young and can be loved for ever. Religion gives to two such souls divine sentiments appreciative of the things that belong to God, creates in them mysterious longings by which they mutually desire each other, and unites them with that same *kind* of affection or love which unites them with God. Love under the guardianship of religion has no term, never perishes, death itself is powerless against *this* love, and time that annihilates everything is impotent

to touch this celestial creation. Did you ever observe the countenances of SS. Augustine and Monica absorbed in the holy love of mother and son as they are shown to us seated by the sea? In the infinity of their thoughts they spiritually rise to God. And this is that divine love of which I speak to you, a love which seeks happiness in promoting God's greater glory. Do you follow me, Christian spouses? Ah, if you do not I pity you, for you will never succeed in attaining to a love either lasting or happy; the divine flame will remain hidden within the depths of your heart like the fire in the flint. Then, indeed, do I pity your homes, your wives, your children. For what is love without a celestial ideal to raise it? Union with God means strength and courage to weather the storms and accidents of our voyage through life. But, instead, what do we see? Within the first few days, or for some at a later date in their married life, we see the climax of the ordinary conjugal love; having attained to which the downward progress commences with varying pace, but none the less surely. How few, alas, are not discouraged by the initial difficulties of their state. Here, however, is the time for religion to exercise her holy influence. Natural love is about to fail, and with failure comes misery untold. It is for religion to raise this love to the supernatural by its appeal to the *infinite*. The flame of true love is kindled at the fire of infinite love, and those who understand this can render love immortal. The passage of years and troubles only lends fresh lustre, new glory, to the beauty of souls, the homes of this heaven-born love. But take away religion, and you will have nothing to ennoble and purify love. You see the lamentable failure of what you believed to be immortal, and are overcome with grief when you see it perish. Your dreams of

bliss turn out the veriest illusions; and all because you did not understand the sanctity of your nuptial ties. Instead of seeking the goods of marriage in the light of God's grace, you have chosen the darkness of unbelief, that region of gloom unblest by one ray of divine light, where grace has been lost to hearts that have harboured only sensual longings and debased desires. It was thought to join title to title, gold to gold, crown to crown, and to find in such interested unions ineffable joys. But instead, you have found only melancholy and disgust, and rivetted an iron chain about your necks. Your bond was not a Christian one, was not blessed by God; and hence it is without affection, love, or sweetness, a sad and melancholy bondage, for which you have only yourselves to thank. Indeed, it would seem that the youth of the present day enter on marriage as though in that state they thought to find only gaiety, flowers, and sweetest music, to know nothing of sorrow, and meet with no cloud to obscure the splendour of an azure sky. But on closely examining the married state we find imperious duties to be accomplished, crosses to be borne, obstacles to be overcome; in other words, perennial requisition of the spirit of sacrifice. Hence de Bonneau wrote that "*matrimony is a sacrifice rather than a contract, a crucial test for both man and woman.*" From the moment in which either party pronounce the "*I will*" they pledge themselves to reciprocal and mutual help, and promise to suffer the one for the other. But without the Cross of Calvary, the seemingly most suitable unions are wrecked on the rocks that abound in the sea of matrimony; the pilot, Religion, being absent, love is dashed to pieces and lost. At the mere mention of sacrifice our heart beats responsive to the call; we would obey it, but fail in any lengthened strain on the

virtue, even for the object of our strongest love. Here is the reason of those differences and quarrels, of even the newly-married, begun in private and ending in notoriety, and the rupture of mutual faith and love. But how, you ask, could such an intense affection degenerate into carelessness and indifference? How is it that those young people who but the other day were united in an eternal affection cannot now endure each other? It is because they knew not how to sacrifice themselves; and that bond, which was thought so strong because joining gifts and inclinations of mind and heart deemed particularly adapted, was in reality most weak, for it wanted religion. Now, it is no easy thing to make a sacrifice without religion; and though it may happen that two persons united by mutual affection may succeed in making sacrifice the one for the other for even a long time, yet this is only an exceptional case, and in the long run impossible. Religion shows us an exalted ideal when she joins the two right hands at the altar, saying, "My children, this altar, mark you well, is but a tomb; this, your first ceremony, is nought but a sacrifice, and the happy life of your dreams is bathed in the Blood of Jesus Christ. Do you see His Crown of Thorns? Look, it throws its shadow over your crown of roses." But, when God has blessed their "I will" they will be able to face the crosses of their thorny way with a confident hope of overcoming them in the strength of divine grace, for that "I will," has created for them an abiding fount of blessing, enabling them to lead a pure and holy life, in which concord, harmony, and love will burn with steady flame at the hearth of a happy home.

I have spoken to you of wedded life without religion, and will now present you with the converse picture of a Christian marriage. It is

futile to play with the fancy. Religion has taught young Christians that the apparent happiness of which we have spoken is evanescent, and that natural affection is fleeting and vanishes into thin air, more quickly than the perishing of the delicate flower in the rays of the noonday sun, unless it be sanctified by the light of divine grace. They have, therefore, recognized as a most important event of their lives that solemn act in which they pledged their mutual troth the one to the other before God's altar, in the sight of the holy Angels, and with the sanction of heaven. These two Christian souls may not find the fruition of the dreams of earlier days, nor meet with affection so pure, disinterested, and sweet as was limned in the rosy tints of their youthful fancies. If these two souls are equally mated, the benedictions of heaven will light on them, and all will go smoothly; but in the opposite event, if at a moment's notice the pleasant dreams and cherished hopes of their young illusions melt away, will they turn to society for the strength they need? No. They will ask it of faith, which offers them a new road beset with abnegation and heroism, along which they will proceed without fear, regardless that society knows nothing of their sacrifice, but satisfied for God alone to be witness of it. For them it is enough that God knows it; and kneeling before His altar they draw from tears and prayer the supernatural strength they need. Behold here, my brethren, the true picture of Christian marriage.

But unhappy those who, having banished religion from the domestic hearth, from society, and from their hearts, yet find themselves unable to banish those crosses which sacrifice alone can bear, lighten, or overcome. One has only to read the papers to get an idea of the suffering, anguish, sorrows, and tragic scenes which such people have brought upon themselves.

Nor is this all; for there is in a family, not only the parents, but also children, at once their joy and consolation and the source of anxious care. Now, a child being born, the father and mother become incessantly occupied with the thought of it; for the child, who if he has a body has also, and is principally, soul, which it is necessary to train in purity, chastity, faith, the fear of God, brotherly regard, and self-respect. And as it is necessary to tend, not only the body, but also the soul of the child, so, if misled through the influence of the passions, he must be regained. And should he prove intractable, then must more fervent, heartfelt prayer be raised to the throne of God for his return. If, my brethren, you deem it possible to carry out any part of such an onerous task without religion, then I will ask you how? for if you banish God and the spirituality of the immortal soul, if you believe the child to be mere matter, only a part of nothingness, how can you look to the destinies of its soul? Of your children's soul you cannot be the progenitors, and they, void of religion, would be your tyrants as such, your torments in youth, your dishonour in after-life. Banish religion and you will never succeed in forming a family worthy of the name, but only a brood of shameful and dishonoured children, who, because ignorant of the laws of obedience and the idea of duty foreign to them, can pay you no respect. Nor is this to be wondered at, for if they have no respect for their Father Who is in heaven, and Who is the source of all order and duty, how could they be expected to entertain it towards an earthly father? No, the father who discards religion at the same time snatches from his own head the halo that alone procures the respect of children. Sublime, indeed, were those times when the father was at once priest, prophet,

and king in his family. Now, however, he is no longer a priest, for he prays no more; no longer a prophet, for the knowledge of divine and human things has fled from his darkened soul; no longer a king, for he has let slip from his grasp the sceptre that faith had placed in his hands. And what can the parent without faith say to his child? Will he, do you think, speak to him of God, Whose Name he only invokes with blasphemy on the lip? But how can he speak of God's laws when he has despised them, how of religion when in word and deed he has trodden it under foot? Perhaps he will talk of parental authority? But by denying, and contempt of, its basis, God, he has lost this authority. Possibly, then, this father will correct his child by citing his own future, his interest, the education that is for his own advantage? But this is only to appeal to egotism, and, even if it seemed to have a good effect, would be valueless, as resting on a basis which a burst of passion raging in the soul would at any moment overthrow. Hence, that so many fathers have nowadays to endure the errors of their children is not at all a matter of surprise, but instead only the natural outcome of their impotency without religion.

But what shall we say of the mother, than whom, I believe, our Lord God has not created anything on earth more sweet, tender, and divine? Her voice is the very symbol of compassion, inasmuch as God has frequently willed to compare Himself to the maternal heart. But, observe, it is religion which supports the heart of the mother in her gentleness and frailty. What must we think of her, then, without religion, her only support? How could she wean the son of her sorrows from error to become a son of God and heir to celestial glory? From whence would she

derive resignation amid all her physical and mental sufferings, from whence constancy and the spirit of sacrifice enabling her to practice the virtues of a faithful wife and mother? And what comfort could such an one prove in her home? She might love her child as her natural offspring, but she will care for its body only, not for its soul; for she believes not in God, and consequently could not make Him known to her child. She never realised her mission to cherish its spiritual life.

I can well understand that the enemies of religion exert their utmost endeavours to snatch woman from God, for between them and the rising generation there stands the mother, and so long as she remains faithful the child will listen to her gentle but all-powerful voice, and nothing will be able to withdraw him from God. But I cannot understand how husbands can attempt to induce their wives to turn from God. Do they think their spouses, apart from Him, will become purer, more resigned, more loving? Oh! most unhappy men! if you thus pull down the columns of the temple you will be buried under the ruins. And how bitter will be the tears of that mother who has nourished her child with only material, and left him destitute of spiritual food! In vain will she seek in her heart for peace and joy, for they will be strangers to it! God has made the heart of woman a garden for the lovely flowers of chastity and religion. But if you destroy the latter the former must necessarily vanish, for it cannot exist apart from religion. Nor is the inevitable consequence of such an event hard to see. Husbands, full of disgust and melancholy, would assuredly seek elsewhere the happiness they longingly looked for in vain at home, and would endeavour to drown their domestic troubles and burthens in an irre-

gular and dissipated life; thus seeking rest and contentment anywhere but in the place they ought to occupy, and by indifference and abandonment bringing about the estrangement and dishonour of their wives. Alas! it is not rare to meet with women devoid of love for their own firesides, improvident, and incapable of doing anything to attach their husbands to home. How many mothers, who have ministered to the temporal needs of their children, think they have fulfilled all their duties, and leave their offspring to themselves—abandon them to evil companionship, or to the infamous teaching of certain professors and masters, and that without one thought for their immortal souls. Hence disobedient and disrespectful children, whose young hearts never beat with the love of father or mother, and who regard the fireside only as a prison-house, from whose chains and fetters they would escape at the earliest possible moment. And now, What is the consequence of all this? It is obvious. The absence of every family instinct in father, mother, and children alike; the absence of God. The true ideal being absent, all family ties are by degrees loosened, and eventually break, dissolve; and the heart of each disunited member, a stranger alike to divine and human ties, is plunged into a profound solitude. Then, from this disorder, must follow the extinction of the family. Without God, father, mother, and children, led from the narrow path of duty—for the word could have no meaning—fall into all sorts of dangers and excesses, and must reap a harvest of sad, but natural, consequences. See the father, in the company of bad companions, spending his gains in taverns and such-like places, a slave to egotism and self-indulgence, debasing himself to below the level of brute-beasts, who, when they have no food for their young, will at least abandon

them; but this wretched man, returning home late at night to his hungry and suffering children, to whose cries for food he returns only the inarticulate words of the inebriate, the derision and blows of the drunkard, only adds to the pain he himself has caused. See, then, children without education or training, lost, with their parents, to every sentiment of morality; in short, a family without religion.

Yet even this sorry spectacle is not all. There is no grander sight, nor one more moving, than that of a venerable old man surrounded by the affection of two generations. Caressing and caressed by children and grandchildren, in sickness he is the object of the tenderest solicitude of each and every one of them, who also lovingly gather round him in the moment of his joys. But had not such old men given their children God as their heritage all would have been changed, and in place of devoted care they would have received but carelessness and worse. Their children would have openly carried on their animosities, spoken with indifference of the old age of their parents, and with ill-hidden allusions regretted the prolongation of their lives. Instead of loving care, parents who banished religion from their families would be held under the harsh tutelage of their children, who, in moments of discomfort or rage, would reproach them with having given them birth. And the parents, terrified and reduced by menaces, would receive those imprecations and carry them involuntarily before the throne of God, there to receive punishment for themselves and their children. Behold, then, *a family without religion.*

Now, brethren, that we have considered the family without religion, and, seeing its wretched-

ness, have conceived so great a compassion for it, let us contemplate a family where religion bears her beneficient sway, and then do you endeavour to order yours in the same way.

Picture, then, to yourselves a father and mother surrounded by a group of five children. Inexorable death has snatched some from among their number, while sorrow has laid her hand on all. But certain of embracing those lost ones again in Heaven, yet still cherishing the divine instincts of natural and earthly affections for those still around them, they fail not to speak in the presence of those children of the kingdom of Heaven to which they all aspire. Their education is based on Christian love. During the earliest years the child is under the sweet maternal discipline, which, however, is not of such a nature as to effeminate or endanger the character. Both boy and girl are educated under men, citizens, and women thoroughly aware of their exalted mission. Good example on the part of parents is a habitual school for youth, and good accord between father and mother an excellent model for the children, who will, in their turn, become the heads of new families. This is the home of love and innocence, where order and due economy sweetly rule, and reflect, if faintly, the harmonious beauty of the Holy Family at Nazareth. Rising in the morning they say their morning prayers, begging God's blessing on the work of the day, and in the evening kneeling again, they thank Him for the favours and graces bestowed from His bounty. How touching is the sight of a family which prays, loves, and labours! Together they sanctify the holidays, since they are consecrated to God. Thus they look to Him with confidence for a perennial blessing on themselves and all they undertake Again, at the Table of the Angels not one of them

all is wanting at the Easter Communion. Thus they carry under the roof-tree Jesus, Witness and Consoler in their sufferings, Sharer in their joys. And how pleased is Jesus to find Himself in that home, and how grateful to Him that family over whose fire-side affections and joys He thus loves to preside and deigns to take part in; for around that hearth the love and joys are honest and pure, and will never be turned into the remorse of the morrow. A close and mutual sympathy lightens all their sufferings; hence despair and suicide can never cross the threshold of that happy home. In the solemn hour of death faith mitigates the pains of the dying. When the priest who is ministering the last consolations of religion implores the help of God for the soul about to depart, the rest of the family answer with the prayer of a sublime hope. And then, before everything ceases for them here below, the parents raise their hands in sign of benediction, and instead of an enforced "*Farewell*," it is the consoling words, "*Till we meet again*," the children of their pious training hear gently breathed from those beloved lips. Then around the cross planted over their grave, brothers and sisters will often unite to bind even closer the sweet ties of remembrance, and sigh themselves for that eternal repose already attained by those whom they loved and revered while on earth, for eternity's home, where the happiness of the family which commenced in time will be consummated in the everlasting joys of Heaven. Oh! be persuaded, my friends, that the happiness of this family is of incomparably greater price than all the pleasures of those who live without religion, and that the sufferings of this home where it is respected have balm which others have not. Behold here what religion does for the family.

See to it, then, my brethren, that religion prospers in your families. Foster that religion which alone makes happy fathers, exemplary mothers, virtuous and affectionate children, good and useful citizens. It is such homes as these, under healthy discipline, that form free states, all fitly ordered to advance with certainty on the way to their lofty destinies.

Let me conclude, then, by repeating that religion alone is able to produce and realize the true ideal of the family, and, as its true sun, call once more into blossom the pure and fragrant flower of "home-life." As the sun is necessary to the flower, so, if we would have it we must build up the family life on the basis on which it was founded by Jesus, and respect those laws which He has imposed on us. If this be done, order and happiness will reign in the home thus set up. St. Augustine has written of happiness, "*that it is nothing but the tranquillity of order.*" Order, then, your families according to the Divine Will and model, and your homes will become, as I sincerely desire, true likenesses of our true native home in Heaven.

XI.

ST. JOSEPH.

Did you ever reflect, my brethren, how the Church, the Spouse of Jesus, preaches the truth appropriately? The word of the Church has its opportuneness, and those who consider facts only lightly do not always recognize this opportuneness, nor see that her words, inspired by heaven, are adapted to the precise necessity of men and times. They, therefore, wonder and cavil on every occasion, and call in question the action of the Church. But the earnest man, the man who looks below the surface and endeavours to discover the destinies of Divine Providence, soon perceives both this opportunity and the close relation that exists between the necessities of a certain age and the remedies applied to them by the Church.

And now let us see what the Spouse of Christ, with the wise foresight of a mother, opposes to the incredulous scoffers who nowadays dog her steps. It is the tender adoration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whose ardour reinvigorates faith. And see, too, what the Church opposes to the audacity which now denies the existence of

original sin, and which, in opposition to the Church, vaunts the sole sovereignty of the flesh. It is the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

What, again, does the Church oppose to Society as it is in our days, whose one desire is gain, and which, seeking only a voluptuous life, exhibits all its faults in bold relief? She presses on our notice the poor, simple, and indefatigable St. Joseph. Taking him away from the workshop, she raises him to the Altar, and thus causes an immense and sublime burst of devotion.

Do you not think this opportune and wise? Does it not seem to you a useful remedy for the evils that devastate modern society?

For this reason, to-day being the feast of St. Joseph, I wish to speak to you on the cultus of this Saint, to prove its suitability, and to induce you to persevere in invoking him. No doubt you expected this theme to-day. I will, therefore, only ask you to listen with your usual courtesy, and address myself to it at once.

What are the Evils of Modern Society?

In the first place let us consider their sources.

The first then, is Pride, which draws us away from God, to whom, inasmuch as it is from Him we have received everything we have, everything must be returned.

Paramount in our days is *Love of Self!* Vain-glorious man boldly says to God: Thou art Lord, but I also will be lord; Thou art God, but I also will be God; Thou teachest "*There is no other God besides Me;*" but I reply, "Besides myself there is no God. The mouth is mine, and I will blaspheme as I please; the heart is mine, and I will corrupt it as I think proper; mine is the flesh, and I will gratify it with sinful indulgence."

Man, separated from God, by denying the Being who created him, exalts himself, not only above God, but above his fellow-men, whom he regards only in reference to himself, but never himself in reference to them; he esteems nothing but what ministers to his self-love, what furthers his ambitious ends, or flatters his vanity; he sacrifices everything on the altar of Self; he desires to rise superior to, and be the despot of, everybody, and hence it is that we meet with so many removed from the position they ought properly to occupy: everyone wishes to become a chief, and, if possible, to lord it over everyone else. Linked with pride, however, nothing is found but disorder and trouble; everyone wishes to command, none to obey, an excess of ambition which generates either slavery or revolution.

Another source of the present evil state of society is avarice, which now, more than ever in the past, is the idol of the people; the golden calf to which not only is incense offered, but soul, heart, and conscience alike. Avarice is now an infernal tyrant, for which every allowance is made; dishonourable transactions, fraudulent bankruptcies, extortionate usury are its ministers; while country, family, honour, everything, like the Angel of Milton, who, all absorbed in admiring the golden pavements, loses the splendours of Heaven, bows down to this monster. Give them only gold, fortune, and the proprietor, the politician, the economist have obtained their only aim.

Gain, much gain, always gain, this is what occupies men's minds. It is mere waste of breath to speak of faith, of virtue, of morality!

Then another source of the corruption of society is voluptuousness of life.

This is usually connected with pride. It is

easier to turn back a brook so as to run upwards, back to its source, than to make a proud man chaste and humble. The proud bear on their faces the mark of the beast. A celebrated woman used to say that "it is the heart that makes the head ache." Do not suppose, however, that I shall contaminate your ears with a recital of the odious practices already too well known.

Here, then, are the sources of decadence. In the face of all this decadence a reaction is necessary, and this reaction can be nothing but a thorough reformation of customs, a total change of habits. Whatever progress, whatever effort may be made, will be in vain if it lack this reform, without which all other reforms of society will bear no fruit.

For this reformation of habits the Church offers us the cultus of St. Joseph, that admirable example to man, to the family, and to society.

Though descended from the Kings of Juda, he was a poor saint, the implements of whose trade constituted his only riches; he dwelt with a Woman also poor, and with a Child who was called the Carpenter's Son. But that Carpenter is the first of the Saints, that Woman the Queen of Angels, that Child very God!

What a lesson! It reminds us of the words of Solomon: "All is vanity except to love God and serve Him alone."

Oh, ye rich, learn from St. Joseph humility amidst your grandeur, detachment in your wealth, moral dignity in the uplifting of your heart: for the only thing really necessary is to seek the Kingdom of God—all the rest is nothing. St. Joseph will offer you an example of how to respect and love the poor, our equals, not servants and subjects, and who have been called by God, not wretched, but blessed.

And you, who are poor, learn from Nazareth how God honours the poor, but the resigned, not the rebellious poor, the poor who love and pray, not the poor who curse and harbour hatred. He who nurses hatred against the rich merely because of their riches, is not poor with the poverty of Jesus; he who covets the goods of others is no longer poor in spirit, but cursed for his sinful desires

When, O poor, you are refused the leavings from the tables of the rich, think of St. Joseph, who consoles you, saying: "Poverty is no dishonour, as neither is wealth sanctity nor happiness. I, too, have suffered, and my former sufferings create in me a great sympathy with you."

Here then is the Saint whose symbol is the Lily, the King of Virgins, and, after Mary Immaculate, the purest among all God's creatures. O, youth, in whom the fire of life and love burns so ardently, betake yourselves to St. Joseph. From him you will learn the beauty of love and modesty. He will comfort you in conflict, hold out his hand to you if perchance you may fall, and with paternal love will place on your brow the victor's crown in the home of your eternal reward, the Paradise of God.

In Joseph you indeed behold the true saint, humble and modest. Yet what has he done? What has he said? In all other saints we ever find something eminently splendid in their virtues. But in St. Joseph all is hidden; and of his words not a single saying remains to us. Though master of the mysteries of Heaven and Earth, he asked nothing for his own glory. He is a poor artisan of Nazareth, unknown, and, perhaps, despised; whom, however, the Church has placed next to Mary, the mother of God; for God, who cannot go from His word, has said: "He that exalteth

himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (St. Luke xviii. 14).

And now let us consider the dangers arising from those sources of evil in modern society already spoken of above.

The first consists in that study of the exterior to the neglect of the interior; that working for appearance' sake, forgetting what is real; that ostentation, that false desire to *seem* without caring to *be* what we seem. Apparently all is wealth, fortune, probity; but lift the veil, and you will find nothing but a putrid corpse, and perceive only the stench of the grave.

Even devotion itself fails daily in this respect. How many pious practices are neglected because they would be hidden from the view of man? The cultus of St Joseph is a reaction against this fatal tendency. The characteristic of the sanctity of St. Joseph is *simplicity;* nor would any portrait of this dear saint seem faithful were this quality unexpressed. This simplicity consisted in a perfect ingenuousness of heart, which rendered him at one with himself by an entire accord of his interior and exterior being; at one with God by the faultless harmony existing between his faith and his works; and at one with his brethren by the absence of everything contrary to simplicity and by his universal and excessive charity. This is the characteristic simplicity of which St. Joseph was so splendid an example. Without moving from his obscure position he arrived at the sublimest heights of virtue and perfection.

Yet another of the present evils is the abhorrence of work. Before the sin of Adam this was as a crown; afterwards it became a toil. Well, Jesus Christ, through being fostered by a poor workingman, through embracing his trade, through bathing his forehead in sweat, which was, as it were, the

second outpouring of the Blood of Redemption, has rehabilitated labour, whether mental or manual, with the characteristics of necessity and expiation. And He has distinctly told us there is no work without sweat: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth" (Gen. iii. 19).

Unfortunately in our days these two characteristics of work are lost sight of, while, in reality, they ought to be ever present and recognized. Some see no necessity in labour, but only the means of arriving at indolent ease; others, on the other hand, are bowed under the yoke of slavery.

The employer approaches the workman and says to him: "Destiny has made thee poor; well, give me thy labour, I will give thee my bread." Then the workman accepts, and hence the prostitution of labour.

Observe well, now, and you will find that the principal motive of labour is gain, not the obtaining of bread for ourselves and families. I repeat, the major motive is gain, inasmuch as it is the means by which we can gratify our passions. We do not say to the workman: "Work that you may live;" but, on the contrary, "Work, that you may be rich, and indulge yourself in feasting, theatres, and any other amusements." So our workmen are always longing for the means of gratifying their desires, and therefore it is that we see them with the envy of the soul reflected on their faces, and often, too, with the dagger in their hands.

As a remedy, then, the Church offers the poor workman the example of Jesus and Joseph in the workshop at Nazareth; Jesus, who teaches the sons of labour to learn from St. Joseph that if work is a burden from which He did not see fit to dispense us, yet it ennobles us and carries us upward to Him, to Jesus, who, with gaze full of

tenderness and words overflowing with compassion, comforts poor Joseph.

To those who work, the Church shows Jesus and Joseph draining all the bitterness of the cup of labour, of mortification, and of poverty, and sweetly says to them: "Console yourselves, you whose lot is that of Jesus, true God, and of Joseph, chief of all the saints of God."

Another fertile source of evil in modern society is unbelief.

One man may be an atheist, and yet appear honest; but not so a people, who, when perverted, excite themselves and become like wild beasts.

That which was wanting to Rome in her decadence is now wanting to us. Yet this need is neither riches nor material progress, nor science, nor laws—but *virtue*. The remedy for this deficiency, however, is not a political, but a religious reaction; it is this that we stand in need of, that we may all escape safely from the danger hanging over and ready to overwhelm us.

Alas, too, virtue is wanting not only among worldly people, but also among Christians themselves, in whom there no longer exists that faith which produced heroes, martyrs, and saints.

True, there is faith, but it is merely conventional, and with difficulty are temptations mastered.

How is faith to be revived? By taking as our model that sublime Saint most eminent for his simple faith. Look at St. Joseph! He was all for Jesus, in whose weakness he recognized the omnipotent power of the incarnate God, in whom he implicitly believed.

An angel appeared and said to him: "Fly by night." It is an angel who counselled him to that refuge of the weak. But why? Has fear, perchance, entered heaven? Joseph, however,

raises no question; he simply believes, obeys, and adores. See here the pattern on which to model our faith.

Would we be saved? Then let us listen to the words of the Gospel: "He who believes shall be saved." If to every truth revealed to us we shall have said, "I believe," then we shall be saved; if we believe in the Divinity of Jesus, in the Sacraments, and in every dogma, then before the altar of St. Joseph we can with reason and confidence ask to imitate his many virtues.

Again, brethren, we find ourselves to-day face to face with another, and one of the most fatal, of our evils, and this is the decay of family life, and the contempt of the sacred character of matrimony. The family life, the basis of the country, of primitive society, has its foundation in matrimony.

But to what have the family and matrimony been reduced?

Can you not see what is sought in matrimony? First of all *convenience:* they couple pedigrees, escutcheons, possessions, and wealth, but compatibility of temper and inclinations is the object only of the few; and, as a rule, matrimony is considered merely as a matter of business or as a speculation. St. Joseph, however, was united with Mary because their virtues were a mutual attraction.

Secondly, the matrimonial union is commonly defective. Marriage to-day may be compared to a railway excursion in which two persons, seated in different compartments, salute each other on starting, see each other on the ultimate arrival of the train, and again, perhaps, at the hotel. But totally unlike to this is St. Joseph, cited by the Church as a perfect model of wedded life, in his union with Mary in the heart of God.

Thirdly, respect, the guardian of love, is wanting. Here the Church points to Mary, all submissive to Joseph, and to Joseph, full of such boundless respect for Mary that he scarcely attempts to approach that altar of God. Then, again, holy chastity is absent. Can we affirm that unions are now chaste as the Scriptures tell us of that of Tobias? The Church, to revive in the world the spirit of chastity, shows us, in the Holy Family, matrimony wholly divine.

Moreover, the spirit of sacrifice is wanting in marriage now-a-days. Yet in matrimony it is more necessary to bear with than to love each other. And the Church offers us in St. Joseph the true example of the spirit of sacrifice, for he never leaves Mary and Jesus, and his matrimony has more thorns than roses. Yet he is in all things our most perfect exemplar.

Do you, see, besides, what is wanting in the family? In it there is no longer authority: yet here are Mary and Jesus yielding ready obedience to the behests of Joseph. He is the model of fathers because he knows himself to be the representative of God, the earthly representative of our common Father in heaven. Now-a-days, through the denial that the source of paternal authority is God, the father can no longer counsel what he refuses to practise himself. Thus it is that, unwilling to be the representative of God, he becomes in reality the representative of Satan, and must fall the victim of his own children, whom Satan inspires to rebellion.

Joseph, again, is the example of parents because he is the model of guardians. See with what devoted care he watches over the Holy Child! Jesus one day wished to be thought missed; it was the greatest sorrow of Joseph, but Jesus willed that he should feel it in order that he might enjoy the

merit of having found Him again. But how are children looked after now? Even at the very fireside, injurious books, immoral newspapers, scandalous novels, and corrupt friends are allowed to obtrude their baneful presence.

Then, again, fathers to-day are no longer "*educators;*" they endeavour to *instruct*, but not to "educate;" they teach how to read, but not how to love; they teach how to write, but not how to comfort: they teach how to count riches, but never how to examine the conscience. Enjoyment is more esteemed than submission; accomplishments, but not virtues, are taught. Let parents, therefore, humiliated through the loss of authority, prone to a too great deference to their children, see and admire in St. Joseph the example of the *educator* of whom Jesus wished to be thought the pupil and Son.

Lastly, in the family, the *mother* is wanting. Could the heart of the mother be changed, then the world too would be changed; for it is in her bosom that the man is moulded. Love, too, is now wanting in the family, for Jesus Christ is no longer present in the eyes, in the heart, in the soul. He alone, as Lord of every family, has the power of infusing into it peace, authority, love of parents, respect, and submission of children, The true end of *education* must be to impress Jesus in the heart of youth, so that He can never be expelled from it; to make the mind know Him, the heart adore Him, and the will follow Him.

And thou, O blessed Family of Nazareth, divulge to us the spiritual splendours that shone within you, and may we learn in your celestial school in what our duties consist and find there the courage to persevere in fulfilling them!

Another scourge, and that not a light one, that torments society is one on which I have somewhat

to say. Ignorance of the blessedness of "Christian suffering" is now the rule, and its utility a truth unfortunately not understood. To reach Heaven we *must* suffer. Yet how terrible that "*must*" sounds in our ears. Well, to soften it, Jesus has said: "Blessed are those who suffer, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven" (St. Mat. v.); and, again, "He who would come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me." In this way He becomes our conductor, preparing the way by His example. But who now is found to follow this heavenly teaching?

Some, led away by evil counsel, curse and call down imprecations on their masters, whom they look upon as the cause of their sufferings; others cry, "Why do I suffer if God exists?" But had society not lost the true conception of earthly life, from which sorrow cannot be excluded, nothing of all this would happen. Existence here is necessarily a struggle, and Rousseau himself said that only those who have borne the hardships and sufferings of the battle, can aspire to the palm.

Here, then, is St. Joseph teaching us how to suffer. No one, Mary alone excepted, has ever suffered as he did. He has suffered by the will of God in those trials of his benignity, through the opposition of men, in knowing himself despised and avoided, and especially did he suffer when, on the night of the Nativity, he was compelled to lead the adorable Mother of God to a wretched and deserted hut; he also suffered the sad anguish of the pilgrim, he ate of the stranger's bread in the land of his exile, felt the poignant sorrow of losing Jesus, and the all-absorbing anxieties of seeking Him. Now all this tells us that we, too, must suffer; for were suffering wanted, so also would be the pledge of eternal salvation—for suffering is no less than this.

Let the thought, then, of St. Joseph, our august model, comfort us in all our trials and sorrows. No one was more docile and submissive to the Will of God than he. Whatever that Will imposed he readily embraced as his real good. It is for us to imitate him.

A certain saintly woman used to say, "There exist only two things for me: to suffer and to communicate.

By imitating St. Joseph we cause the spirit of sacrifice to spring up in the place of self-love; patience in that of blasphemy; virtue in that of vice.

Lastly, there is another terrible evil, *Death!*

It has always been a great evil, but never as in these times. Never have sudden, unforeseen, and impenitent deaths been so frequent: never have pagan deaths, that brute-like parting with life, nor impious deaths, in which the last breath flings an insult at Almighty God, been more numerous.

Hence the necessity of a special protector in death. Him the Church shows us in St. Joseph, whom God has made the dispenser of many and signal favours, but especially of a holy death.

Let us in spirit once more visit the Holy Family. There, assisted by Jesus and Mary, Joseph died the sweetest death that can be imagined. Call to mind the picture of that blessed death. On one side kneels Mary weeping and praying; on the other is Jesus, who with one hand supports the head of the dying Saint, whose pallid face is radiant with celestial joy; with the other, points to Heaven, so soon to be his, and with words of ineffable sweetness, "Go," he says to him, "O beloved, go now to the limbo of the holy Fathers, happy messenger of their imminent liberation. But receive first the embrace of thy Jesus, whom thou hast so well protected, cherished, and loved

as a devoted father." Then Joseph smiles at the tender words, and at the divine embrace; and in that smile is written perfect submission to the Will of God, perfect resignation to separation even from Jesus and Mary, so dear to his heart. Thus, with that smile of submission, peace, and joy, gently passes from this life Joseph, at once our model and Patron in life and in death.

At this holy sight we breathe forth a sigh, child of the parent desire in the soul, "O, that I, too, might die the death of the Just!"

This is the blessing I most fervently desire may be ours. It has been my object in speaking to you to-day, and I would emphasize it again.

"May I die the death of the Just."

He who immolates himself on the altar of charity dies the death of the Just. May this be yours and my last end!

XII.

SORROW.

"LIFE is a burthen," said St. Paul; and we unfortunately feel it. Under this burthen we groan and struggle, are often conquered, always weeping. And we feel the burthen to be triple in form, consisting of sorrow, labour, and death.

Sorrow, labour, and death! Behold the destroyer of every charm in life, the monster which stifles every joy.

But while I weep, while I groan under these terrible trials, there steals over my soul, like sweetest melody on the ear, the voice of Jesus, saying: "O, you who suffer, you who are depressed and crushed under the weight of your sorrow, of your labour, and by the anticipation of death, come to Me and I will console you." What do these words mean? That perchance the great law of labour, as ancient as Creation itself, is about to be abolished? That perhaps there will no longer be sorrow on the earth? Assuredly, no! Both labour and sorrow will remain. What Jesus would do is to mitigate the weight of the former and the tormenrts of the

latter. He comes to give us consolation, that consolation which man indeed needs, but which the world cannot give. In order to live, man needs bread; but he must soak every morsel of it with the dew of his tears. Behold that poor man there, on the side of the road; he is eating and weeping. But if you approach him, and say a kind word to him, some word of encouragement, he will cease eating to listen to you. And why so? Because the soul is more unfortunate than the body; because his hunger is more for consolation than bread.

Therefore it is that Jesus has said: "Come to Me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Mat. xi. 28).

Unfortunately, however, they will to-day no longer listen to the voice of Jesus, no longer will they betake themselves to Him, no longer seek comfort and consolation in Him and in His holy religion, but from sources where they find but the aggravation of their discomfort, and in the end despair. We do not intend to be among them. We will pray God for His holy light; we will go to Jesus, and, with eyes full of tears, will say to Him, "We suffer; console us." And He will console us. But how? Have the goodness to listen to me, brethren, and you shall hear.

What, then, does Jesus do, by means of religion, to console us?

In the first place, Religion tells us why there is sorrow. In every temporal affair, in our studies, in the consideration of life, sorrow meets us at the outset, and its existence cannot be doubted, for it is general, universal. We both feel sorrow ourselves and see it around us. Its existence is thus proved individually in ourselves, universally in the human race.

Here is the truth about mankind. "Man,"

says the Holy Scriptures, "living for a short time, is filled with many miseries" (Job xiv. 1). Sorrow is in the very air we breathe within the walls of our homes; it is, as it were, an inheritance. As babes, we announced our advent into this world with a scream, which is a cry of sorrow. As youths, we felt the first pulsations of happiness, and we ran, we flew after pleasure; but suddenly our progress was arrested, and a cry of sorrow escaped the lips. Why? It was the thorns of the rose that pierced our hands, and the poison that embittered the dregs of the cup of pleasure. When we are aged it is ever the same; sorrow upon sorrow. In every phase of our existence, from the cradle to the grave, we have had tears, sweat, anguish, delusions, and sickness as our constant companions.

Man is the creature of sorrow; and we can all, in our own persons, bear testimony to the fact. Let us now listen to that of humanity at large.

Every people, from the earliest ages down to our own days, has made songs to sorrow. That which takes place in the life of a people takes place also in the life of the individual. Have you ever heard, my brethren, a child asking her mother, with a cry that is really a revelation: "Tell me something that will make me weep?"

Man, indeed, appears to need reverses and falls that he may enjoy the recreation of rising from them. Such, at least, is the apparent testimony of humanity at large.

But there is also another witness: the earth. The animals subjected to man, do they not seem to share with him in sorrow? Listen attentively, and you will hear a deep groan rising on every side, a note of sadness which makes you ask if all creatures are not immersed in a sea of sorrow. Whence all this? Is sorrow, perchance, an irony

of providence? Has God, then, taken us from nothingness to give us over as a prey to sorrow? Does He, like the ferocious Roman Emperors, who loved to see their victims yield up their lives in the grip of the wild beasts of the shameful arena, take pleasure in seeing us suffer?

Oh! were it so, I should say that God was cruel, not a father, but a tyrant, and should unhesitatingly exclaim: Why hast Thou created me if I am to suffer for ever? Cursed. But no, brethren, let us not utter this blasphemy, as though God were really the cause of our burthens and sorrows rather than we ourselves.

Behold man's forehead. It bears two marks: one of rebellion, the other of his condemnation to death. How is this?

Take the Bible, and in the very first pages of it you will find the reasonable explanation of sorrow and the solution of this problem, the despair of human reason. The Bible says: God having created our first parents, left their and their children's destiny in their own hands, subjecting them to an easy test of obedience. To the everlasting misfortune of the human race they failed, and fell; temptation came and vanquished them, they violated the law of God.

"And the Lord God said to the serpent, Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle." To the woman also He said: "I will multiply thy sorrows in thy conceptions: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." And to Adam He said: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life" (Gen. iii. 14-17).

Thus then, through sin, sorrow entered into the

world. Our sufferings are the consequence of the sin of our first parents.

But why do we suffer for their sin? How can sin be transmitted to us?

Tell me how life can be transmitted to us, and I will tell you how sin can be transmitted. For me, philosophy and faith are enough; the first teaches me that every being generates another similar being; the second that we are all dead with Adam, but that Jesus has redeemed us.

No one can escape the inevitable law of sorrow.

Man can escape everything but sorrow, which binds him fast, as in a vice. The chain of sorrow is made of a metal that, despite whatever strength is used, never breaks. Yet even in sorrow man has some moments of happiness; though they are so rare that Bossuet has compared them to the nails which, when nailed on the walls appear to occupy much space, but gathered together they can be held on the palm of the hand. Sorrow, then, since it is inherent to it, is a necessity of human nature; and since it is an heirloom of our first parents, it is a law of the heart.

Sorrow, moreover, is not only a punishment, it is for the fallen man a salutary proof, in which the wisdom of God is manifest. "When you suffer," says St. Paul: "You see only the hand of a judge; but it is that of a Father who would save you," cf. (Heb. xii. 5-11).

What! can we let no one whom we love suffer? Rather, can we not let anyone suffer the more, the more we love him?

Behold your child; see him there leaning over the edge of a precipice, trying to gather some flowers; you run, you seize him by the arm and draw him quickly from his perilous position. Should he weep for his disappointment, you do not feel moved, since what you did, you did it for the love of your child.

There, again, is an unfortunate man, a would-be

suicide, who has pointed his revolver at his own head, and is on the point of pulling the trigger. You rush up to him, snatch the all-but fatal weapon from his grasp, and however vehement may be his anger and protest, you do not let them frighten you into non-interference.

Take another instance. Your child is sick, the doctor orders a nauseous medicine, and you, his mother, induce him to drink it, because it will cure him. Or if a painful operation be required, you will hold him, and though at the sight of the blood you suffer interiorly, yet you will do so with a smile on you face. Meanwhile who is it that suffers the most? Surely it is you, the mother; and you are not to be accounted cruel, for, should you act differently, you would show that you had no real love for your child.

Well, brethren, what we admit in the case of the mother and for the friend, let us also admit with regard to God. Then we shall begin to learn something. It is certain that if God has no existence for us we must find sorrow an enigma. But, if this be the case, when overcome by sorrow, what is there left for us to do? Pain must do its work in secret and silence, devouring our very life within us, for we can ask no consolation from a God in Whom we do not believe, nor of men who are unable to do anything for us; but we must suffer on without hope of comfort till we end in the death of despair. We, on the other hand, who believe in God, we shall be able to see and understand His wisdom in giving us sorrow as our inheritance.

God has placed us here below in this world, designedly all too narrow for our aspirations, on purpose that we may tend to Heaven, which alone can satisfy our cravings, and gain there eternal happiness. I said designedly made too narrow,

for He has so created the world that we cannot move without meeting with limits, and it is on account of these limits that we aspire to vaster horizons. Thus it is that we raise our eyes to Heaven, and yearn for that satisfying happiness that we do not and cannot find here below. But if, instead of directing our gaze upward to Heaven, we lower it to the earth; if, instead of soaring like the eagle amidst the realms of infinite space, we bore like the worm in our mother dust, shall we not impel God to make us feel still more sensibly the narrowness and insufficiency of terrestrial finalities? Since we are ever in danger and have always an insidious weapon in our hand, should He not snatch it from us? Were He not to do so, He would no longer be our Father, He would neither love nor care for us. Hence, for this very reason, He sends us sorrow, for this gives us a genuine estimation of the world, making us value it for what it is worth, that is, as the vestibule through which we must pass to our glorious and eternal destination, the very heaven of God.

Prosperity, with its captivating chains, binds us, unconscious of the thraldom, down to earth, which it shows us as a delicious retreat in which we should like to sleep on for ever, never growing old, and with no such thing as death to end all in our regard. But quickly the dream of bliss is dispelled by invading sorrow, just as the mist in the valley vanishes in the presence of the rising sun. Then all is changed; black night comes over us. But heaven opens above, and, piercing the clouds of earthly sorrow, its peace and glory flood the soul with celestial light. Then faith bears us on the wings of hope, and soaring beyond the littlenesses of earth, the aspiring soul bursts from the impotent chains of terrestrial prosperity as un-

satisfying as transient. Thus the storms of our life are like the storms of nature. From out the dense clouds, whence the crashing thunder leapt forth in peals of dread, the light of heaven descends to earth. Then, amidst the surrounding darkness, a glimpse of the better land is revealed to the poor exile below, bathing his soul in its holy light, encouraging, strengthening, and consoling him.

The first thing, indeed, that sorrow does, is to enlighten us. Yes, sorrow is a fire that burns; but it is also a torch that gives light. How many things there are which the man who has not suffered knows nothing of! When God sends us sorrow, it is light in the pathway of life that He gives us, opening up the highway of faith. "Suffering," said an illustrious woman, "conduces to faith in the soul, but too much joy rather tends to doubt."

How many souls have, in their perversion, been deaf to every word that recalled them to God and truth, yet have been converted as soon as sorrow has touched them? It is in sorrow that Saul exclaims, "My Lord, my God!" And St. Stephen, when being stoned cried aloud, "I see, I see Jesus." And how many who have persistently resisted the prayers of mother, spouse, and friends, have found in sorrow the way to the faith?

Behold a man, happy and prosperous; his business could not be more flourishing; his wife is faithful, his children are docile; he does some good; he finds time for everything but for God, for Whom he has not a thought and to Whom he never prays. Though his mother taught him to join his hands in prayer to his Creator, God is now as a stranger whom he knows not, although all nature around him speaks of his neglected God.

But suddenly God puts an end to the happiness of this man; the death of a beloved child brings misfortune to his door. Now, however, those lips so long sealed to the voice of prayer are heard echoing the plaintive cry of the smitten heart, "My Lord, my God." He who in prosperity had forgotten God, has found Him again in sorrow.

Sorrow, besides, does another thing: it cures a disease which includes all others, and which, of all others, assails man the most, concupiscence. When the body gains advantage over the soul, it becomes sensual, guilty of carnal appetites, a slave to infamous thoughts. In this case, also, sorrow is again the remedy. In the same way that the earth must needs be brought under the plough that it may yield us fruits, so must the soul pass through the fire of sorrow that it may be cleansed and purified.

Again, that man, though only a short time ago so violent, yet now since he has been visited by sorrow has become gentle with all, and wishes to be esteemed the friend of everyone. That heart, but lately so selfish, has found love in tears, and now has charity for all men, for whom, indeed, he is ready to sacrifice himself at any moment.

Therefore, my brethren, let us not chafe under the burthen of sorrow; for while chastising, it raises and regenerates us. God's blows of sorrow are to our soul what the blows of the artist's hammer are to the iron—they shape and beautify it, fitting it for its destined end. Alas! concupiscence often triumphs, and the soul is sullied by the poisonous blast. Then God, in His infinite justice and mercy, touches that soul with the avenging rod. "Punishment," said a learned and venerable man, "dogs the footsteps of crime with slow but certain retribution."

A ship, sailing in mid ocean, has in one of her

sides a small leakage, through which the water enters little by little. If the leakage be not stopped she will sink in the end. And so, too, the soul would certainly be lost were there not a counteracting force of adversity to interrupt the tenor of its complacent prosperity. And in this force we recognize the third mission of sorrow, expiation.

Who is there who does not feel the weight of his own crimes? Who is there in whom the thought of Divine justice raises not a tremor of fear which enters into the very marrow of his bones? But how are all these crimes to be cancelled? With expiation, with blood.

Tears are the blood of the heart. Thus we can unite our blood to that of Jesus. Our tears and sufferings are the complement of the Passion of our blessed Lord. Every one of our crosses, our pains, our tears, our blood, our sufferings, form our grateful offerings to the blood, the tears, the pains, and the cross of our Lord. Let us, then, unite all our sufferings to those of Jesus, and, instead of crushing us, they will open up to us the ineffable joys of pardon, and we shall find in Jesus not a terrible Judge, but a loving Father.

Seek not sorrow, my brethren, yet if it come do not reject it, but receive it as a friend, as a baptism, from out of whose cleansing waters your souls will rise regenerated and purified.

And God has done even more than this. He has ordained that our sorrow shall benefit not only our own souls, but also those of our nearest and dearest. Hence it is that the sufferings of a few just souls are enough to save so many sinners.

Behold that man who never thinks of God; for whom, indeed, God has no existence except in the moments of insult and blasphemy. Yet the Divine ustice has not struck him. Why? I will tell

you: the miscreant has a mother who prays for him; he has a wife who suffers, and, in the secret of her heart, it is for him; he has an innocent child, who offers his ingenuous and simple heart to God for him. It is, my brethren, because every sorrow is an altar on which each one of us can immolate himself for the one beloved.

Why do peoples still exist? Why do not the nests of human evil crumble under the weight of so much that is nefarious? Because there are generous souls who suffer and sacrifice themselves for the good of their brethren.

Here, again, is another thing that sorrow accomplishes. It makes a man great.

The block of marble that comes from the mountain side is a shapeless but precious mass. But the chisel of the cunning artist approaches it; blow follows blow, and by degrees, under the touch of the skilful hand, there appears a majestic forehead, and then a face all radiant with animation, and on whose lips there lingers yet the smile of joy. In one word, the sometime shapeless block has been transformed into a masterpiece. Well, brethren, man is the marble, and sorrow is God's chisel with which He fashions masterpieces among men, imprinting on their souls the life and beauty of generosity, glory, and greatness.

Genius and science are not enough; sorrow also is needed; sorrow, that alone can make a man *great*, by educating and strengthening him in its school. Nor can virtue itself suffice, notwithstanding that it is the most sublime thing. No; something else is needed, and this something is misfortune. This may be a mystery, but it is nevertheless the truth. We are placed within limits beyond which we cannot pass without effort and sorrow. We are, as it were, in an iron cage, the impediments of which a vulgar soul never

overcomes, but before which it is as a bird that dashes itself to death against its prison walls. The vigorous soul, however, overcomes every obstacle, and comes out ennobled and *great*.

Be sure that the poet, who makes those lovely and touching verses that carry you away on the tide of emotion, has known and been proved by sorrow. The soul sings not thus till sorrow has been its guest.

He who has not suffered lives a superficial life; his heart is a stranger to tenderness, and the range of his thoughts is cramped and narrow. In the same way that the stone must be struck in order to obtain the spark, so must the soul be struck by sorrow that it may become noble and great.

Interrogate history, and it will tell you that all great men have been proved by sorrow. The laurel wreath of victory adorns no brow unscathed by the crown of thorns. Homer, Milton, Dante, Tasso are held as great on account of the greatness of their sentiments; but these were attained under the lash of sorrow's ennobling school. And here, too, are formed staunch and heroic soldiers.

Never is a soul more resplendent with beauty than at the point of death. Yes, in that moment the spirit of sacrifice shines as a holy light on the face. Look attentively, and you will see that man, in the presence of death, is in the zenith of his greatness.

Hence it is that the Martyrs and Saints meet our most lofty conceptions of the sublime. For the love of God they lived in sorrow, and this sorrow rendered them the glorious masterpieces of the Divine Artist. But let us consider these friends of God, surrounded on all hands by promises and menaces. For these they care nothing, and every attempt of the enemy to make them deviate from their path signally fails. Overcome

by misfortune, the smile of an interior peace never deserts the faces of the Martyrs, radiant with the love of that God for Whom they not only fearlessly meet, but even long, for death; for that death which will enable them to leap from the torments and tortures prepared for them, their souls refulgent with the splendour of charity, and fly from time and sorrow to the joys of their eternal reward in the Heaven of God.

Thus sorrow withdraws us from earth, but leads to heaven.

The exile who carries his all into far-away regions, unless he be a very generous soul, soon forgets, amid the splendours and attractions of a new country, the beauty and endearments of his once-beloved fatherland, so easily abandoned. But only let difficulties overcome him, suffering overtake him, and poverty surround him, and then he thinks of, dreams of nothing but that distant home, around which are centred all his heart's affections, the thought of return to which at once soothes and torments him, and for which object he deems no toil too irksome, no suffering too great, no danger or difficulty too insuperable.

Well, brethren, we are but poor exiles, and if we long for heaven, our true native land, it is because sorrow afflicts our soul.

The heart has been created to yield an entire adoration to the one object of happiness. Thus, when we recognize that happiness is not to be had in this world, then it must needs seek it elsewhere, and concentrate itself on God.

Picture to yourselves, brethren, a little child, who, on his way to school, stops before an ant-hill to feed the ants with a crumb of bread; one of the insects passes near the crumb without, however, noticing it, whereupon the child does everything he can until he at last succeeds in attracting

the ant's attention to the bread, when, full of happiness, he watches it as it now carries away as a treasure the crumb so long neglected. Well, what has that child done? He has discovered to us the strategy of God our loving Father, Who scatters along our path the adversities of the "prodigal son" to compel us to return to the paternal roof, to Himself, our first beginning and our last end.

Lastly, let us glance at sorrow as a means of meriting.

To bear everything for a great cause; to renounce our own freedom; to shed our blood rather than fail in accomplishing our duty, or in responding to the voice of conscience; to defend the honour of the nation's standard at the cost of our very life. Such deeds as these are the aspirations of every noble soul. But we do not imperil our life, we do not suffer, we do not weep without some adequate cause.

The Christian, however, always finds in sorrow a sublime end, a great cause, which end and cause are expressed in the possession of God, Who is Light, Happiness, Truth, and Life!

The Sacred Books tell us: "Blessed are those who pass through the way of tribulation, for suffering is the crown of life." Jesus Christ teaches us that "Blessed are all they that weep and suffer, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (St. Mat. v. 10). St. Paul says, "Brief suffering is supreme glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17).

Ah! brethren, let us not execrate, but rather thank our Lord that glory, happiness, and beatitude are not gratuitous gifts, but the fruits of our own labour and sweat. Let us then endeavour, like the labourer who gains his bread by the sweat of his brow, or as the soldier the medal at the cost of his blood, to merit at God's hands the reward of

glory and perfect beatitude in the land of the Blessed. Were it otherwise, brethren, there would be wanting the crowning joy of all, the happiness and glory of being able to say, "This Heaven is mine, for I have gained it; this beatitude is mine, for I have merited it by suffering."

Sorrow enlightens, restores, purifies, ennobles, detaches us from earth, transporting us to Heaven where we shall be united to God, our eternal happiness.

The Resurrection, brethren, followed close on the scene of Calvary. But it is, as we may say, always Calvary: all the suffering life of our Divine Lord, and especially those dread hours of weariness and desolation, when His agony was so boundless as to cause that terrible sweat of Blood, at which an Angel was sent to console Him, as well as when the last sad, heart-rending words, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" were wrung from the Divine lips. But always in the hour of need came the celestial consolation.

And when this time shall overtake us, when sorrow shall overcome us, whence will come our relief and consolation? Shall we find it in science? But science is impotent in the presence of sorrow, and no tears have as yet been wiped away by it. The old science used to say to those who wept: "Tears are a shame on the face of man; forget your sorrow, and you will be happy;" or, "Deny sorrow an entrance to your heart, and you will be the equal of the gods." Irony, derision, effrontery, madness, both the one and the other.

Modern science says that sorrow is to be banished from the earth. And as sorrow, according to that science, results from the inequality of social conditions, and from the abuse of authority, so it argues that everyone must necessarily be recognized as equal, and authority be humbled. For

the fruition of this idea modern science has done everything; it has tried every system and device; but the earth remains what it always has been, and always will be, a vale of tears!

Who, then, will console men?

My brethren, would you see a man and a woman free-thinkers, in the presence of sorrow? Believe me, there is no better spectacle than this to make you bless religion, and shun incredulity and scepticism that dries up the heart as the winds of the desert parch the poor little flowers.

If these free-thinkers, man and woman, were here, I would say to them: "O, you who believe not in God, you who preach nothingness, approach and behold! Here is a mother who has lost her only and well-beloved son. The wretched woman is beside herself with grief, but cherishes the hope that descends like sweet balm on her breaking heart. Well, before that sorrow what will you, freethinkers do? You either tell the poor woman that she is wrong to lift her gaze to heaven and there seek her child, that heaven is empty, or rather has no existence, while everything ended with the grave; or you ensconce yourself in impenetrable silence. In the former instance you would dash the cup of hope from the lips of the thirsting woman, harden her heart, lead her to curse God, and kill herself; while, in the second case, your silence can wipe not one of her tears, nor save her one sigh of sorrow."

But I will bring before your notice some facts within my own knowledge. In the year 1882, in Florence, there died a man whom I knew very intimately. Around his bed there wept a woman, still young, and four children. The doctor came, a materialist; he examined the patient, and finding that science could do no more for him, endeavoured to console him by saying: "My friend, it is now

time for you to arm yourself with your philosophy." But the patient, looking at him, answered: "It is time, instead, that I arm myself with my faith."

Dry consolation that of the doctor; simple and profound words those of the dying man!

To arm one's self with philosophy forsooth! But what is this advice really worth? What consolations can it possibly give to the afflicted?

The moral that emanates from the materialistic system is one only; the excess of egotism, the triumphant and all else despising *I!*

But this is not the fault of their intelligence; it is the fault of their incredulity. In fact, what can *reason* say without the help of faith?

See that man laid low by an incurable disease. It is needed to console him. Will you perchance, say to him: "This is now the moment of all others to arm yourself with your philosophy?" But to do so would be simply to make one's self ridiculous. Or will you tell him: "Such is our destiny from which no one can escape?" But what meaning have these words? What is destiny? What is fatality? Does it mean that there exists, perchance, another will, another power, besides the will and the power of God? This is just where pride is punished. It will not adore God, but it adores nothingness, for destiny and fatality without God are nothing, since we cannot conceive a power without conceiving the source of it, nor can we conceive a power without a being who possesses and communicates it.

Ah, my God, my God! Thy word is the highest wisdom of all wisdom; and he who despises it is mad, and necessarily falls into thousands of contradictions.

But blessed be Thou, O Lord, for Thou hast revealed the truth to the simple, the truth which is

faith, for faith shows us first the Cross and then Jesus on it.

As a mother, who, by smiling and caressing, persuades her child to swallow the medicine, so does the faith show us Jesus on the Cross drinking from the cup of sorrow and death. Here is the first consolation—The Cross.

Then faith shows us Heaven and says: "There is what thou mayest gain by repentance and sacrifice."

O, brethren, raise your eyes there above, salute, salute the dawn of freedom! What are all the pains here below in comparison with the glory of our Lord God? Do not let your heart be disturbed, brethren; do not curse life, but love it—love it, not for itself, but as the preparation for a better one, as the prologue of an eternal poem of happiness which God will give us there above! Love it as the farmer loves the furrow, to which he has confided the seeds which, he hopes, will be for the nutriment of life; as the exile loves the journey at the end of which he sees his beloved fatherland; as the young soldier loves the battlefield where he will receive the laurels of victory, the baptism of the hero!

XIII.

THE TRUE RELIGION.

WILL you allow me first to ask you to explain what is, in our days, the true status or condition of Catholicism?

Possibly the answer may not seem to you an easy one, for if, on the one hand, you see Catholicism gloriously passing from triumph to triumph, on the other you behold it hated, opposed, imprisoned, and chained like a conquered enemy.

Well, Catholicism, in our days, stands in the same position as did her heavenly Founder when standing in the Court before Pilate, who asked: "Art Thou a King?" "Yes," answered Jesus, "I am a King who reigns in the understanding of man to enlighten it, and in the heart to direct it to good, and in the way of truth." "Quid est veritas? But what is Truth?" asked Pilate, who, without waiting for an answer, left the Saviour in the hands of the soldiery.

It is the same now with religion. We ask her: "Art thou a Queen?" And she answers: "Yes, I am a Queen of the understanding, of the heart, of the will; I teach truth, and show the way to

attain it." Then man asks: "What is truth?" But he waits for no answer, and straightway departs. Religion calls after him, but he heeds her not. His only reply is: "I do not need you, for I have another and more attractive religion. All religions are good, therefore mine will do; I prefer it, therefore it is the best for me." This is the way with the incredulous; this is the maxim we so often meet with in the newspapers. But it is a heresy which mingles truth with error; which places vice and virtue together on the same throne. It is false to the individual, whom it reduces to the level of the brutes; and it is sheer blasphemy against God, to Whom it denies the wisdom of determining the best way for man to adore Him.

No, not all religions are good. This is a sort of superstition, or false reasoning, opposed alike to public morality and the honour of God. If there exist but one true God, then there can exist but one true religion, all others being necessarily false. By declaring, then, that they are all good, we annihilate all, and practically proclaim atheism.

If the pretended oracle, "*all religions are good*," were true, then all discussion as to one or another would be vain; for it would be sufficient to select whichever pleased us best, even a brand new one, taking no account of the Catholic Church, the Protestant or "Evangelical" sects, the Mosque, or the Synagogue. We may, therefore, ask: To what end, then, did Christ come into the world? Why did the Apostles preach? Why did the martyrs willingly suffer their glorious deaths? Or, indeed, why do you endeavour, even with gold, to procure followers, especially from among the young? And why, again, if all religions are good, why should not ours also be good? Well, then, leave us in peace, do not call our religion odious

and detestable, nor account it infamous! Indeed, if all religions are good, and Catholicism be also a religion, then, mark me well, on what ground can you oppose it with such vehemence, and point it out as a monstrosity? Why do you persist, as Edward Quinet used to do, in dragging it through the mire? But, at least, do not contradict yourselves; if all religions be good, then honour Catholicism as one of them.

To this they object: "All religions are good except Catholicism."

But, if you thus make it a unique exception, yet admit that it is a religion, then you betray your fear of it. And, if you fear it, then it means that it is the true religion. Otherwise you would not wish to root it out, but would extend to it the same tolerance which you show to the others which you despise.

This appears to me to be a suitable answer. But stay, let us consider the matter more closely, and put the question: "Are all religions good?"

Imagine a vast gallery exhibiting a varied and entire collection of all religions. You see Jupiter, Vishnu, Mahomet, Confucius, Luther, and others, then a number of different idols from the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. "They are all good forms of religion," you say, for in the development of nations all were adored, and, therefore, all must be respected. Though the principle of religion has been gradually transformed, yet its substance is the same. Thus under these varied appearances you respect the same intention of the individual to adore the Divinity, whether it be by means of the ox, the garlic, the onion, or the stone.

But this doctrine is contrary alike to reason, to public morality, and to the honour of God. It

causes horror as an infernal monster among doctrines, which, by destroying all others, sets up atheism on its ruins.

First, it is contrary to reason, as we may easily see. Religions must be either all true or all false, or there must be one or more true, and the others necessarily false. Now, if even one be false, how can all be said to be good? And if all, or all but one be false, how much more is this tenet impossible! Those who maintain this doctrine practically justify crime, and authorize hypocrisy. But if they proclaim *all true,* I can hardly find a name for them, for one religion denies what the other affirms, one blasphemes what others adore, this one reveres, what those despise. Hence, if any religion be true, it alone is so, and all others must be false.

For can it be credited that white is black, that yes is no, that water and fire can possibly be combined? According to those who say that all religions are good, the Christian who proclaims that Jesus is truly God, the Mahometan who hardly recognizes Him as a prophet, and the Israelite who despises Him as a wretched and lying impostor, would each do well. If this be the case, he spoke with good reason who said there could be no utopia, however impossible, without its votaries; for to say that "*all religions are good*" is verily the greatest utopia of all. God cannot accept both truth and falsehood, adoration and blasphemy. Were He to do so He would cease to be God. No, if it be true that God exists, then the true religion *can* be but *one,* and *one only.*

And if human law respects all religions as equal, this will always remain an open utopia for the conscience. But, since reason has demonstrated that there can be but one only true religion, it would be simply puerile nonsense to

regard religion as only a plaything to amuse the fancy.

We have seen that if all religions were good we should be obliged to admit that truth is all one with error; that to acknowledge God, or not to acknowledge Him, is all the same; and that to adore Him or not to adore Him, or to adore Satan in His stead, is all one. If truth means anything, has any existence, then two religions, opposed to each other, cannot possibly be true. Similarly, if God exist, it is impossible to admit, at the same time, to religions in opposition; and if the law tolerate such concurrency, it is offering a utopia both for logic and for the conscience.

Rousseau wrote: "Of these religions, all of which are now excluded, there is only one which is true."

Therefore, while reason unerringly proclaims that there can be but one true religion, so likewise the morality of the individual and the civilization of nations require it also.

On examination we discover, in every age, a relationship between the religion of a people and their history. In the north we see the Germans and the Scandinavians, who personified Divinity under appearances more cruel than voluptuous, and they were severe in the practice of virtues which, like their Olympus, were a strange mixture of barbarism and civilization.

Within the Roman Pantheon every vice was gathered together; and neither the cynical Svetonius, nor the severe pen of Tacitus, ever adequately related the brutishness of the nation's decadence. Observe, again, the East. Buddhism, with its immoral mythology and audacious pantheism, has transfused into the people of India a fatal enervation, generating dangerous sterility. Elsewhere Islamism promises its adherents an

eternal harem; and, wherever Mahomet advances, there does chastity, like the grass that was parched under the hoof of Alaric's horse, wither, die, and vanish.

National habit and customs, again, mirror, as it were, a national religion, for society and civilizations are shaped by religion. And who will dare to affirm that all civilizations are equally good? Who will not recognize the enormous difference between the civilization of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and that of modern China and India? Were there found anyone ready to affirm that "every civilization is equally good" he ought to be sent into exile among the Hottentots, where he might learn by experience whether their social condition is as good as that obtaining in a country where a higher civilization has supplanted such elemental crudity.

But, since civilization is based on religion, to affirm that "one religion is as good as another" is, in effect, the same as to maintain that the civilization of one country is equal to that of another, and that, therefore, even the American Indians have nothing to envy in civilized Europeans. But this proposition, though it is, as we have just seen, the logical outcome of the former, is contrary to common sense.

Moreover, to say that every religion is good is also opposed to the honour of God. Observe in Hindostan the fanatic followers of Brahma throwing themselves under the wheels of Juggernaut to be crushed to death; the Carthaginian mothers barbarously strangling their children on the altars of the gods; the festivities of the mysteries of the Good Goddess, at Corinth, which it is not permitted to relate; in Mecca the human hecatombs spreading fatal epidemics throughout Southern Europe; and in France behold the Goddess Reason,

as the impudent priestess of a bacchanalian procession, drawn along in would-be triumph.

But can sacrifices dictated by cruelty and voluptuousness honour God equally with those of virtue? or can the disorders of a Sultan satisfy the essential sanctity of God, like the purity and holiness of the Saints? Were this to be the case I should fly to the summit of a mountain, and, turning towards God, would exclaim: "Away from me, away, for I desire not a God without wisdom, without holiness, without justice; a God who regards with an equal eye vice and virtue; a God who is equally honoured by an innocent holocaust and the perversity of vice."

But, indeed, we should have no need to fly to the desert to exclaim: "Away from me, O God," for where is God if we consider all religions good?

We should have a God caring for neither good nor evil, nor for Himself; in short, a God who could scarcely find an existence even in our imagination. And when Voltaire said that God was neither a Jansenist nor an Anabaptist, it was not in a spirit of levity that he did so.

God is substantial truth, and in Him there can be no error.

While affirming that all religions are good, men either believe in God, or do not believe in Him. If they have faith in Him, then they will not lose it by granting this; but if, on the other hand, they do not believe, then why pretend to indifference as to the *form* of religion? Let them but show their front openly, and then we can meet them not in vain. Let them only confess their Atheism, and they will be no sooner recognized than vanquished, for that error to be overthrown needs no further reasoning. Its last position has already been demolished, and this error may fitly be compared with those crimes

which public opinion condemns ere ever the law pronounces on them.

Those who profess indifference know full well that every religion is destoyed by this maxim, and they know, too, that on the day on which that principle should triumph, all religion would be at an end, annihilated.

But they have not waited to see the funeral obsequies of religion to free themselves from its trammels By regarding it as a coat to be put on and off at fancy or caprice, *their* religion is already reduced to the level of a corpse in the silence of the grave. Such is the abyss into which they fall who maintain that all religions are good.

Yet, if God were to approve of all religions, He would not be, as He is, infinite in all perfections. On the contrary, He would be an imbecile God, a God justifying absurdity. The Gentile of old might then have raised his eyes to heaven, and exclaimed: "O, God, Thou art mendacious, lascivious, base, a thief, like Mars, Venus, Mercury, and the rest." To whom God: "Quite right; and you shall be my elect."

The Catholic exclaims: "I believe, my God, that Thou art verily in the Holy Eucharist; the Blessed Sacrament is the object of my love, of my sighs, of my joy, and my consolation at all times." The Calvinist, on the other hand, exclaims: "O, God, I do not believe that Thou art present in the Eucharist, which is the object of my derision, and of my sarcasm, and, if Thou wert there, of my blasphemy." To whom God: "Perfectly right, both of you; your worship is full of love and tenderness, and really admirable. Blessed are you both." The savage, again, cries, "Thou art a wild beast of the forest, a stone, and I will sacrifice to Thee my own child, which do Thou

accept as my prayer, my adoration." To whom also God: "Thy oblation is perhaps a little harsh in form, but that matters not, for thy heart is at bottom excellent and thine offering that of a *bonâ-fide* good intention."

This, brethren, is the God of Indifference!

It *can* be believed that the professors of any *particular* religion may possibly have a *bonâ-fide* conviction that theirs is the true religion; but it *cannot* be believed that all those who say that every religion is good *because its professors have a bonâ-fide conviction that it is so*, really believe that assertion to be true; or, in other words, it is impossible to believe that all the professors of indifferentism are in good faith—for this would be to concede too much to mental obtuseness; to detract from individual responsibility: as may be easily seen. For, to say that every religion is good, *because its professors are in good faith*, presupposes error in religion, whereas, if every religion be good, there can be no possibility of error. Thus, those that maintain that every religion is good, do away with all error in religion, and, along with error, they also sweep away even God Himself. For religion is but the outward expression of worship, and worship implies (*a*) definite belief in, (*b*) hope in, and (*c*) supreme love for the *object* of worship. But this *object* must be either goodness and truth, and then the worshipper's worship, the outcome of his belief, together with his religion, its outward form, must be good and true: or else this object of worship must be evil and falsehood, and then the worshipper's worship and religion must be false and evil. One alternative or the other must be accepted, for these qualities of goodness and evil, of falsehood and truth, being opposites, cannot reside contemporaneously in the same being. But God is the

object of all worship and all religions; and it has been shown that God is immutable; therefore, God must he either goodness and truth, or else evil and falsehood. Again, if all religions be good, then also all worship, and all beliefs, are good. But, since beliefs are opposed one to another, therefore worship and religions differ. Hence it follows that either (1) *all* beliefs are *false,* or else (2) *one is true,* and then *all the others* are *false.* Further, if all beliefs are false, then all beliefs are bad, and, by consequence, all worship and all religions are false and bad. But if, on the other hand, *one belief* be true, then *one worship* and *one religion* must be good and true, while all others must necessarily be false and bad. When, therefore, men say that all religions are good, they also say, by inexorable logical sequence, that goodness and evil, truth and falsehood, are co-existent in God, the complacent object of true and false worship, beliefs, and religions, and thus make God Himself an impossibility. Thus, by maintaining that all religions are good, they deny error in any, and, together with error, do away with the very existence of God Himself. So that, as a matter of fact, this ridiculous and blasphemous maxim is but a poor and threadbare cloak for the hybrid, and here skulking, monster *atheism,* already vanquished in the open, and now easily discernible, and therefore defeated, in its present covert attitude.

Yet, after all this, the apostles of indifferentism dare to show their face among men, and say with the calm smile of assurance: "It is enough to be just; all else is nothing."

Ah! "enough to be just," is it? But he who offends against truth, destroys morality, and tears down the altar of religion, is not just.

But, Father, they say, "You err; we do not say

that all religions are good. We say, on the contrary, that all religions are bad, and should one and all, be banished from the whole world; there ought to be a clean sweep of the whole of them."

My brethren, the existence of a religion is a necessary consequence of the existence of God and man. I have proved that God is the one only and necessary end of every free and intelligent being, who, therefore, owes Him supreme homage: that atheism is not only a crime, but also a folly; and this alone might suffice to demonstrate the necessity of religion.

Facing, however, this new position, I wil ask: "Do you intend to maintain that all religions are false?"

Very well, then, listen: Can error possibly exist by itself? No; the admission of error always presupposes the existence of truth, of which it is the opposite. In literature, in science, in art, error is the opposite of truth. The latter is the consolation, the former is the torment of the spirit. Error presupposes truth, just as the curve presupposes the straight line from which it is a deviation.

So that when we see the world inundated, so to speak, with many religions, so far from leading us to the conclusion that they are all false, logic compels us to admit that *one* of them must be true, but that, at the same time, all the others must be mere counterfeits of it.

Pascal ingeniously observed: *Were there not a true religion it would have been impossible for man to have invented false ones, and not only so, but it would also have been impossible to have obtained that their inventions should be accepted.*

But how can that which has no existence be counterfeited? Who would have conceived the

idea of counterfeiting that which was held neither good nor true? For whom would they have made the substitute? Were true remedies non-existent, who would have *invented* false ones? And who would have made *use* of them?

A clear proof that man originally had a true religion is the fact that there now exist false ones. And, indeed, false worships could never have been invented, unless by the existence of a true one, men had been predisposed to faith.

He who circulates false coins does so because he is aware that there are true ones, and he who prescribes false remedies does so because he knows there are good ones.

This is the only satisfactory explanation of the origin of religions. Some say they have been invented by legislators as the basis of society. Yet history emphatically belies this theory. She can tell us who it was that created Literature, Art, and Science; but ask her the source of religion, and for answer she will, and can only, point to God.

Thus if we would find the inventor of religion we must seek the inventor of God. Well, say, who was it that first ordained that from such a year, such a month, such a day, God should exist, and that temples and altars should be raised to Him? As to this question history is mute. The fact of religion is anterior to all history; it is the gift of tradition. But were religion the invention of man, how came it to pass that all legislators agreed in making it the basis of society? Why, then, all religions, as it is contended, being false, we should have all legislators concurring, without mutual arrangement, in founding all society everywhere on an error.

It can easily be understood that men, before the progress of astronomy revealed the truth of the

matter, believed the sun revolved around our globe, because this is a material phenomenon incapable of explanation without the aid of science. But this is very different from learned men agreeing to establish for the people, as the foundation of the constitution of society, the belief in an error, in religion, the very conception of which, under any form, is false, and therefore, contrary to human instincts. Yet all of them have imagined future places of reward and punishment.

Here, then, is a strangé anomaly, one which we are unable to understand. We have seen accepted by everyone an error, and this, even, when in direct opposition to the aspirations and the desires of the heart. Cicero wrote: "A proof of the existence of the gods is that there has been no people so barbarous as not to have believed in the Divinity." True, many peoples have imagined false gods, but it is indisputable that *all* have believed in the existence of a divine nature. Thus Cicero proceeds: "The collective opinion of men, that which is believed by unanimous consent, is to be regarded as a law of nature." Well, history shows us one religion in this light, accepted by all men as a law of nature, and maintained by all as indispensable to society.

Up to the present time men have believed that error was dangerous in itself, and that only the truth was salutary; to-day, instead, error, *i.e.*, religion, is reputed to have been profitable, nay indispensable to society. *Error,* therefore, was needed to sanction law. Then the human conscience has been formed by error? And it was error which taught man to distinguish good from evil, the just from the unjust? It was error which created patriotism, love, virtue, sacrifice, and all that is most noble in human nature? On the contrary, by degrees, as this error, *i.e.*, religion,

diminishes, we perceive the peoples and the nations falling into ruin and decadence.

How can we explain this strange fact, which makes a clean sweep of all our ideas and conceptions, until at last it ends by declaring that contraries are identical, that good is evil, that truth is error?

But this is absurd.

Lastly, some say: "Religion is not useful for everyone, but it is useful for the mass of the people, for they do not know that it is an error, and therefore embrace it in good faith. But we who reason know that religion is a human invention, and consequently no one can constrain us to embrace it."

For those who reason thus there is no moral obligation; for them the voice of conscience has no existence. They will, therefore, be at liberty to do just whatever they please, so that it is not forbidden by civil law or prevented by the police.

Thus, brethren, in affirming that every religion is false, we are opposed alike by reason and by history.

"But, father," say objectors again, "if the true religion be the one you preach, yet God, who must be the Founder of it, permits all the others to exist, and sometimes to prevail over His own."

I should like to know who are they that make this objection. Are they, perchance, among those who assign to God the right of creating, and then, when He has created, deny Him the right of doing as He wills with His creatures? This is as if, after constructing a machine, He could not touch one of its parts. If the artisan has a right to the fruit of his labour, the machinist to the machine he has made, the artist to his picture, how much

more has God a right to the works of *His* hands, which He has called forth from nothingness! Or do these people belong to those who refuse to recognize in God the *power* of effecting miracles? If so, how can they reproach Him for not effecting them? Even were He to work the miracle of abolishing all false religions, these people would be as Balaam—the very donkeys might recognize the hand of God, but not these men. But perhaps they are among those who believe in the infinite power of Divine Providence? Ah, but then, if they wish the abiding defeat of error through the intervention of the Divine Power, they desire to annihilate free-will in man, who would then be a mere puppet in the hands of God. But, so far from this, God respects our liberty, and rather than violate it, He tolerates that He be even denied and blasphemed! He imposed this respect upon Himself; whence the permanence of man's free-will, and, from its abuse, so many errors, and so many religions. But what a strange liberalism is theirs! They blame the Church when she imposes a limit to the spread of error, which they blame God for having permitted.

Yet, brethren, if God intended to rule and control our thoughts and acts without our own free-will, He would not form, as He really does, a unique contrast to all other monarchs, and we should, without doubt, become mere automatons. But shall men who have the courage to shed their blood for political liberty be too timid to accept the other more sacred and precious liberty, free-will, the God-given trust, chief of the rights of man as man?

Therefore, brethren, we need not cavil at the tolerance of God. We marvel at it because we do not know the respect due to the liberty of man,

and, above all, because we are ignorant of the profound love of God and of His infinite wisdom!

But, says someone, from your predication there spring forth two very sad conclusions, which we cannot accept.

In the first place, it would result that all those who do not hold the true religion would be lost; and we will never accept such a very harrowing doctrine.

Well, but do you not know that this teaching is based upon the word of Christ and upon that of the apostles? Jesus Christ Himself has said, "He who is not born again of Water and of the Holy Ghost shall not enter in the Kingdom of Heaven." "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Whoever, therefore, does not follow this way cannot be saved.

You call it a too-restrictive tenet; but I say—Have you understood it?

A savage woman meets with a man who tells her that "outside of the true religion there is no salvation." And she forthwith asks—"Where, then, will my poor father be who is dead?" "In hell!" "But he was just, honest, pious; surely he cannot be in hell?" "Yes, in hell!" "Then, in that case, I also wish to go to hell, to be with him."

But did that man speak rightly to that woman? No; the true religion, good as God Himself, embraces those in good faith.

Whom, then, does she exclude? whom does she receive? I will tell you. She receives the son of the schismatic and of the heretic who has been baptized according to the law of the Church, and if, as soon as he was baptized, he dies, his soul flies at once to eternal bliss.

You object. Why, then, when one has em-

braced the true religion does he not tolerate the others instead of combating them? And I answer that never was word more abused than "tolerance."

There are three kinds of *tolerance—civil tolerance, personal tolerance,* and *dogmatic tolerance.*

It is useless to speak of civil tolerance; the Church has already done so. Personal tolerance is opposition to the heresy but affection to the person, or, better, it is opposition to the heresy out of affection to the person; and this is the true science of our Church, of our religion.

The Church, as a Society, enjoys the right of defending herself against her persecutors; but she prefers love to rights; she loves more the existence of her children than her own. We cannot, however, reproach her with the blood of some who may have suffered death through a false interpretation of this truth. Indeed, it is only very little souls who accuse the *Christian Doctrine* of intolerance carried to fanaticism.

No, the Church, like the true mother revealed by the judgment of Solomon, sacrifices her own joys for the existence of her children. The Spouse of Christ, who, dying on the Cross, shed no blood but His own, she desires no cruel martyrdoms, nor triumphs that cost blood; and if she has confided to the apostles and their successors the Cross as her Standard and the Word of God as her arms, she yet tolerates the dagger of the Mussulman and the whip of the Cossack. I could also speak with reference to our own times, but, as I should awaken personal feeling, I prefer to be silent on them. Interrogate, however, the pages of history, and this will suffice.

The Church says to her apostles: wield not the sword, but be always the victims. She rules over the minds of men by persuasion, not with the

violence of brute force; and if blood be wanted to convert the peoples, she offers her own as the holocaust. Thus it is the gentle lamb, not the *Lion of Judah*, that has triumphed over the world.

And now, in what does *dogmatic tolerance* consist? It consists in placing on the same altar Jupiter, Confucius, Mahomet, and Jesus Christ!

But this means to deny religion entirely. It is not tolerance, but hypocrisy, this unfelt and sham respect for every religion.

We do not, as a rule, like neutrality. In Athens, and especially in time of revolution, those who embraced no party were punished. If, then, we cannot shut ourselves up in indifferentism about those matters which relate to social development, how can we remain indifferent as to those which regard religion?

But, some will ask, what is there to be done? And I answer: We must arm ourselves with courage to tear down all *dogmatic tolerance*, and have sufficient strength of will to let *personal tolerance* triumph! Out of affection to the person we must oppose the heresy. In short, dogmatic tolerance is incompatible with personal tolerance, or opposition to the heresy out of affection to the person.

Repugnance to *dogmatic tolerance* will lead you to embrace the truth, the whole truth, and only the truth; the truth which bends not, which no more tolerates union with error than fire with water, the truth which courageously proclaims its indissoluble rights, and not that *demi-truth* of which the Prophet speaks.

Moreover, love of *personal tolerance* will call into practice charity, that *true* charity which unites you to your brethren, which causes you to recognize in the perverted man, not what he really is, but the lofty estate to which he may be trans-

formed; that charity which repels not the poor misguided soul, but offers a helping hand; and not that *demi-charity* of which science vainly boasts to you.

Let us unite with a firm resolution to proclaim always and with one voice the watchword of the Church:

Truth, always *Truth*, never *Error; Charity*, always *Charity*, even with our enemies, and never *Violence!*

XIV.

ON THE SOURCES OF UNBELIEF.

Nineteen centuries ago two men met face to face, One with a total absence of all external insignia, but bearing within Him the power of God; the other, the representative of official power, but without convictions and devoid of energy. These men were Jesus Christ and Pilate, living contrast of truth and error, of omnipotent energy and of pusillanimity. Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of the Faith, came to bear witness to the truth. And Him Pilate asked in tones betraying mingled doubt and irony, "*What is truth?*"—"*Quid est veritas?*" Jesus Christ and Pilate personified the antagonism of their own age and of all others. From that ever memorable moment, Jesus Christ has never ceased to bear witness to the truth incarnated in His Church, nor the followers of Pilate to harbour and spread unbelief. Incredulity rises up as the antithesis of our faith, and is the fatal shoal on which so many souls are shipwrecked. Impudently does the audacity of this fell disease of unbelief spread abroad its moribund breath, and

raise its discordant voice. From the very birth of Christianity, St. Paul warned the faithful against this spirit of incredulity, and prophesied, in accents of the bitterest grief, that a day would come when men, insanely rejecting the gospel of Christ, would abandon their souls to this monster of unbelief — a prophecy which appears to be fulfilled. We cannot deny it, brethren. During the last hundred years unbelief has made enormous strides; it has enthroned itself in the midst of Europe, thriven, and formed a class of men who live out of the Faith, and regard religion either as an enemy to be destroyed, or as a thing foreign to man's true nature, and that deserves to be despised. True it is, brethren, that they are an impotent class, for that which comes from God can never be destroyed, but they are none the less dangerous, on account of the depths of evil they prepare, of the storms they excite, and of the moral shipwreck which they produce. Alas! that there should exist, in this our generation, men who dare to deny a truth, clearer than the light of day, and who, while living in His kingdom, and enjoying His benefits, make bold to deny that God exists. Others there are who acknowledge Him as the Author of Creation, but deny His Providence and His Justice; while others, again, neither admit nor deny the truths of Christianity, because more from indifference than from unbelief, they remain extraneous to all worship; but all are agreed at least in this, that they do not want religion, which they regard as a prejudice attributable to the ignorance of our ancestors, and him, who still remains faithful to it, as a retrograde utterly incapable of appreciating the triumphs of reason.

This, my brethren, this is the great evil which threatens to engulf everything. How can we

arrest it and save ourselves? It seems to me that the first step towards a remedy must consist in an inquiry into the sources of this unbelief.

What are the sources of Unbelief?

The first is Pride, which keeps us at a distance from God Who made us, and to Whom we must give an account of everything. Neither does it appear strange that Pride should hide the truth from us, when we reflect that it is able to conceal its own existence from us. Of all our passions, this is the most difficult one to escape from. There are, perhaps, some few unbelievers whose unbelief is traceable to descent rather than to pride *in themselves,* but we may safely affirm that were there fewer proud men there would also be fewer unbelievers, for every *negation* has its germ in presumption. Faith is submission to the authority of God and the Church. But what is Unbelief? It is the setting up of our own judgment against that of religious authority, in other words, it is an excess of faith in one's self. Hence the relationship between pride and blasphemy is easy to establish. Blasphemy is a particular act which logically includes this first motive of pride. The Bible affirms that the first incentive to the negation of God comes to man through pride. It tells us the cause of the rebellion of our first parents. They wished to know as much as God. On the other hand, the Gospel tells us that those secrets which are hidden from the proud, will be revealed to the humble. Admirable concord between truth and religion. Intellectual pride always leads to blindness. Even if we do not believe in Divine chastisements, we must acknowledge how pride is ever the fruitful source of erroneous judgments and actions in daily life.

How few in the present day make open profession of their faith! Our lips are our own, and our wills free to command them, but who commands them to confess the faith? A first consequence of pride is the vanity of wishing to understand everything. It is hard for the human mind to believe what it does not understand, but would it be so hard were it not from that intellectual pretension which seeks to pass the limits of what is possible to reason. Where the mind finds it hard to bow to faith the difficulty arises from excessive pride quite as much as from limited knowledge. Jules Simon says: "Those are but small minds who pretend to explain everything, to understand everything, to know everything."

They would depend upon themselves alone, and this is the folly of these unbelievers. Before their tribunal, revealed truths are useless, faith is contrary to the dignity of man. And this is pride, for though we are men, when compared with men, we shall ever be but children before God. If we leave the defined faith of the Gospel we must perforce become our own teachers. In short, the love of singularity and the desire of distinguishing ourselves are the offspring of pride. There are, brethren, men so possessed by pride, that the saying or doing anything which others say and do is insupportable to them. They believe themselves superior to all that surrounds them, and consequently think it would lower themselves to believe or practise what others believe or practise. To distinguish themselves they censure what others praise, and despise what others revere. You may see them stand while others kneel, and laugh while others pray. All their ambition and wisdom consists in separating themselves from the crowd in order to prove their own superiority. Very different motives are needed to make *them*

Christians than those which suffice for others. The fever of their pride is such that if they could be authorized to make a religion according to their own fancy they would abandon even this if embraced by the multitude. Having minds as superficial as proud, they blaspheme what they know not, and use to their own condemnation what they learn from their natural lights

The second source of unbelief is *ignorance*. I do not allude, brethren, to those who lack instruction; nor to the honest workman, who, though he may understand his art, and can, perhaps, read an article in the newspaper (often without comprehending it), yet believes himself qualified to judge in matters of religion. Nor do I speak of the incredulous youth, who, because he has been initiated in the first principles of grammar, arithmetic, history, physics, and chemistry, propounds to himself the most difficult of religious questions, like another St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Newton, or Pascal. Nor would I speak of the frivolous woman, who, after reading some book, or speaking with some learned man, holds herself up to dogmatize as a doctoress. I speak of those endowed with authority, and I ask, What do these know of religion? Do they thoroughly comprehend in all its bearings this religion which they pronounce upon with such certainty and reject with such contempt? This religion numbers nineteen centuries of resistance, struggles successfully through every conflict, is found everywhere, while its dogmas are spread abroad over the whole world, and have been professed and defended by men of the greatest genius, not in our country alone, but universally; it has hitherto remained standing, and still continues to do so, amidst the ruins of empires, republics, nations and peoples, which it alone has seen born, mature, decay, and

die. Can they satisfactorily contest the proofs of its divinity? Can they explain, I ask, how the prophecies which announced it, and which are to be found in the hands of our enemies, have been fulfilled and are being fulfilled, under our very eyes? Can they explain, if the Founder of this religion was only an impostor or a fanatic, how He led so pure a life, and became the Messenger of so divine a doctrine? Can they explain how His miracles, which they call false, were attested by the Jews who put Him to death, and by the Gentiles who persecuted Him? Can they, above all, explain how poor working men, in a century dominated by the ideas of the Roman Empire, were able, as says Fleury, "to make men adore as God, a man who died upon the Cross?" How did poor working men succeed in making the most corrupt of worlds embrace the austere morals of Catholicism? Can they explain how so many millions of martyrs have given their blood for this religion, and how the same religion has been firmly established and preserved in spite of so many and so great obstacles? Can they explain how all the gigantic powers of philosophy, and of men of learning have been unable to destroy the work of a poor carpenter and of twelve poor working men? Can they show why time, which destroys everything, has not yet been able to destroy this religion? Can they show why, wherever it penetrates, it carries with it the progress of will directed by intelligence, which produces civilization, and why, when it is withdrawn, the result is barbarism? Brethren, it would be useless to look for answers to these questions. Objectors are unacquainted with the proofs of religion, and attack them by misrepresentation. They do not know their religion, they have barely learnt some formula of catechism

which they have since forgotten, and never studied afresh, or, if they have, they have done so through books which attack its teaching, and not in those which explain and unfold it. A man perhaps enters a railway carrriage, and there meets a lady, who immediately propounds to him her profession of unbelief. He replies to her, "How, then, madam, you have studied our religion?" "Yes, perfectly. I have read the 'Encyclopædia,' and the works of Voltaire, Diderot, D'Alembert." "But those of Bossuet, Nicholas, Pascal, and others?" "Oh, those books, I did not think them necessary." "And you call yourself an unbeliever? Pardon me, but not having read those books, you should rather profess yourself ignorant than incredulous." It is true that among these unbelievers there are some who really deserve the name of learned, but, while their faculties develop in the path which leads them to fame and riches, they lose the sentiment of religion. Immersed in the profoundest *indifference* for what they consider a mere barren detail of conventional life, they have ended by *abandoning* their religious affairs. But, while abdicating the Faith, they reserve to themselves the right of pronouncing judgment on it, and claim to be considered competent judges of Christianity. But why? Because ignorance, my brethren, creates prejudice, and all the stronger as it is void of all reason. The greater their ignorance, the more they arrogate their right. And yet, if one does not understand chemistry, one takes care not to speak of chemistry; if one does not know history, one does not talk of it; in short, the fear of speaking on that which he does not understand awakens in man his prudential instincts. But, to say the truth, this general law, which no one disputes in other subjects, is too often forgotten when men treat of religious topics.

They should remember that the deeper the knowledge, the safer the teaching, and that even criticism is respectful when the critic is a true savant. You will have observed that the latter speaks timorously of religion, while, on the contrary, the ignorant man is arrogant in proportion to his ignorance; the less he is fit, the more loudly he claims the right to judge, and his readiness to pronounce sentence is only equalled by his pride. For him, parents, masters, the Church, the saints, doctors, and great geniuses are sheer superstition, gross darkness, destined to vanish before the light of his reason and intelligence. But to these we may reply with an illustrious man: "*I have observed and examined, and now I believe. Do you also observe and examine, and you will also believe.*"

Besides this ignorance, there is another kind of ignorance, which consists in *half knowledge.* The really ignorant man is not he who merely lacks knowledge, but he who falsely believes that he knows. How many there are in these days who have *some* science, and forthwith believe they know *everything.* They set up for learned; they trouble the world and judge everything, and always judge it worse than others. Many only know religion through some definition which they have found in a book or a review, a repetition of sophisms a thousand times refuted. Such is that irreligious and impious press breathing unbelief in every nook and corner, penetrating into families wherever there be one foolish enough to receive and curious enough to read it, and accomplices to communicate it. And of all the perils which menace religion this is the greatest. For never yet has so much been written against morality and faith as in our days, and never before have these publications been carried with such facility to the

remotest villages. It is a great danger for our country, because the people have great intelligence, which craves for knowledge, but their intelligence being untrained and their science too limited, they attribute it all in full measure to the author of what they read, and hasten to think as he does. There are, it is true, writers who contend for the defence of the faith, but it is not to these that the majority turn to study religion. The "savants" satisfy themselves with their "Reviews," and the people with any paper they come across, and in which they believe as they would in the Gospel itself, and even more implicitly still. It is always the same story, my friends, the story of St. Paul at the Areopagus. Like the great Apostle, the Ministers of Jesus Christ preach His faith, and the indifferent answer as the Athenians answered St. Paul: "We will hear thee another time" (Acts xvii., 32). And the unbelievers reply, like the proconsul Festus: "Thou reasonest like a madman" (Acts xxvi., 24). These false savants know not the taste of true science; they have no sense of science nor love of charity. They are satisfied to skim the surface without sounding the depths, and the little they know makes them giddy.

But, brethren, in this question of religion we have, as yet, considered only the *spiritual* element; yet there is another still more terrible, the *moral* element. Sometimes the reason may be convinced and led back into paths of safety, but too often it finds dangerous abettors in the weakness of the will and in the corruption of the heart, whence arises an invincible obstacle to this return. First, then, let us consider the weakness of the will. This generates unbelief through moral cowardice and human respect. Unbelief struts about, casting raillery both upon religion and upon those who

practise it; while always prating of tolerance and liberty, it strikes at the very heart of religion, and he who fights under the banner of the Faith is mocked at and derided. True, our Faith is no longer dragged before the Courts of Justice, or its votaries placed in the amphitheatre, but it is cruelly attacked in the persons of its disciples, who are forced to suffer a very martyrdom. And to-day it has need of courage to maintain it in safety before the Altar of the God of our fathers, when every knee is bowing before the Altar of Baal.

Oh, how I pity the young! How I pity, above all, the youths and young women who come from the country into the city! God still reigns in the country, but in cities blasphemy and derision of religion are heard on every side. In the city we look in vain for the paternal home, where father, mother, brothers, and sisters, a whole family, unite together to pray. In the city, on the contrary, sacred customs are scoffed at, holy things are ridiculed, and the youth or the maiden learns, alas! to blush at his own piety and soon come to think like the rest. And if the young man preserve his faith, the faith he learnt in the happiness of childhood, what perils still await him on entering society. Ah, brethren, when that youth, launched into society, hears repeatedly that piety is ridiculous, that they who practise it are hypocrites, when he sees that impiety is everywhere applauded, that it becomes a title to honour and a diploma of capacity for obtaining office and favour, will that poor youth have the courage to show himself a Christian? Will he have the courage to proclaim his faith? Will he have the courage to challenge the fear of man's opinion? Will he have the courage to despise the calumnies of the wicked? Oh, poor youth! Once he believed from

the very bottom of his heart, now he no longer dares to appear to do so! At first he will be timid in his cowardly desertion, but soon will be bold against his true, but violated conscience. He will become an unbeliever, not from conviction, but through deference to men, through human respect. "I have," says Tonquin, a profound observer, "seen many who have tried to repay themselves for their servility to the humblest representative of worldly power by the display of audacity towards God." How many, if sincere, must confess that their unbelief has no other motive than human respect. Some will not show themselves Christians, will not profess themselves Catholics, because Christianity, that is Catholicism, is not the fashion in certain offices which they occupy, or in certain salons which they frequent. Others will sacrifice their own convictions, for a smile, for a word, for a joke which often emanates from the lowest quarters of society. They sacrifice every personal sentiment, and bow down before their tyrant, man's opinion. They are believers in the bottom of their hearts; there they hear the voice of God, the accents of religion, the cry of conscience; but, before their pusillanimity, this triple authority vanishes, and while their heart is Christian their lives are pagan. "Listen," said an eminent philosopher of the last century, on his death-bed, "listen, my children, to this last lesson which I am about to give you. I confess and deliberately attest, in the presence of that God Whom I am about to receive, and before Whom I am about to appear, that if I have shown myself but little of a Christian in my words, actions, and writings, it has not been through conviction, but through vanity, and because of the opinion of men!"

Oh, how many who wear the mask of the un-

believer could use the same language! But whence this misfortune? Touffroi, a learned philosopher, answers: "Because character is wanting." And why is character wanting in our day? Why? Touffroi again replies: "Because two of the elements of which character is composed are absent, that is to say, *will* and *principle*. *Will*, in our day, is replaced by pusillanimity, while as to *principle*, it is utterly wanting." When principle is despised and sacrificed, character is lost; man is both blinded by his passions and oppressed by the will of others, and thus has neither strength to form and develop his convictions, nor courage to put them into practice. Oh, how mean a thing it is to take the opinion of others for our rule of faith! Oh, how mean to allow our will and our conscience to be so subjugated! How foolish to sacrifice our conscience and our future happiness to the vanity of human respect. And you, young men, who are listening to me now, will you, in this our day, when liberty is so much talked of, and while against tyranny and oppression the voice is so loudly raised, will you now allow yourselves to be imposed upon? And by whom? By persons who do not respect themselves, but who would respect you if you had the dignity and courage to rebel against their coercion, for be sure, my brethren, dignity and courage always impose respect. Break, then, the chains which enthral you, and boldly display to the world the faith you still have in your hearts, the religion learnt from the lips of your mothers: hide it no longer, but proclaim it and unite it to a burning charity. This, this is the greatness of man, to have the courage of his convictions! But, brethren, though the tyranny of human respect be great, it would not make so many slaves, so many victims, if it had not other

passions as accomplices in its evil work. It is the austere morality of the Church which frightens and keeps men away from our religion. An illustrious man once said: "Take away the Decalogue, and we will recite the Creed with you." There is no virtue which is not preached by our religion, nor any vice which it does not exclude. And in truth the Church ever preaches austerity, penance, and the cross. It is only on these conditions that she promises us consolation for the present and in the future. But, my brethren, "*Durus est hic sermo*"—"This is a hard saying"—and it is a reproof which has been made to our religion. Men think, if they do not say: "Religion, thou art too austere; give us a little liberty. If thou wouldst only promise Paradise to the proud, the libertine, and the miser—to the ravisher of the goods of others and to the oppressors of the poor, then there would be much fewer unbelievers in the world." But religion answers: "Truth is inflexible; it is like God, Who cannot bend or be divided." The world may change and perish, but the Church cannot abrogate one word of the Decalogue nor falter in one iota of the Creed. We must be Christians according to the Gospel, or be no Christians at all. Rejected thus from the lap of religion, the passions turn to philosophy and embrace its morality, which is, in truth, a far easier one. The sensual man and the intemperate would alike be Christian, did not Christianity absolutely enjoin temperance, and hurl anathemas at those who make a god of their passions. Behold that man consuming his life and his substance in orgies and debauchery in company with his chosen companions. He cries out against our religion, which, in his eyes, has no other fault than that of condemning his sensual appetites. Behold that

woman. She is engrossed by a love of dress, and no longer finds any pleasure in her family or in the fulfilment of her proper duties. She would plunge into amusements, but religion condemns her conduct. Then, tired of hearing its stringent voice, she becomes an unbeliever. But, foolish one, what does she gain? Will her children continue tractable, or her husband any longer believe in her fidelity? Will her fame be as pure? Ah, brethren, philosophical morality offers but scanty guarantees. Let him who will, believe in the modesty of an unbelieving woman! Again, that ambitious man longs to reach some elevated post, but as the misfortune of the times has rendered piety and faith suspicious attributes, he simply rejects them, and covers his ambition with the cloak of scepticism. And yet even he dares prate about hypocrisy! Who more a hypocrite than he! Either he was a hypocrite when he called himself a Catholic or he is a hypocrite now that he affects to be sceptic! And the miser, what does he do? They in want turn to him and say: "A little dole for the love of Christ?" But he replies: "Superstitious follies, I am an unbeliever, and unbelief is not prodigal; unbelief does not prescribe charity." Another man is in the enjoyment of a rich patrimony, to the accumulations of which he has no right, for his possessions were unjustly acquired by his father. One day, however, a claimant arises to require them of him. But the Church commands restitution of another's property; he, to defend himself from a Christian, becomes an unbeliever. Another has increased his capital by infamous speculations. The poor artisan, defrauded by him, the widow stripped by his usury, knock at his door, and implore aid. But all in vain. The unbeliever has no pity for them. Religion alone teaches the duty of repara-

tion. I should never make an end, brethren, were I to speak of all the passions which cover themselves beneath the cloak of unbelief. But there is one which is more especially despicable, and that is immodesty! The carnal man, says St. Paul, does not understand spiritual things, neither does he perceive the light from Heaven. "*Io non era accademico, se non perchè era depravato,*" said a notorious man. The incredulous like to drive from their minds every thought which condemns them, and endeavour to force themselves to believe that they fear nothing. "They will not understand," says the divine poet, "lest they should be constrained to good works." And St. Paul says, "They have lost their faith because they would not listen to their conscience, and thus have fallen a prey to their inclinations." From what I have told you, brethren, you will understand that unbelief is not the effect of science, but rather the punishment of the corruption of our age. "It is the heart which has injured the head," as an illustrious authoress has said. Scepticism is the negation of the Creed, and forgetfulness of the Decalogue. St. John Chrysostom said: "As the life, so is the doctrine." And St. Augustine wrote: "Every error has its root in the heart, for when the heart is led astray, it has its secret reasons for finding false that which is true." An erring heart is the prolific source of those clouds of doubt which obscure the intellect. When the heart is given up to pleasure, the mind will embrace any error which seems to justify it. The only arguments of unbelievers are their passions. Hence Rousseau said: "Give me a man who so lives as to make him desire that the Gospel be true, and he will believe in the Gospel."

Brethren, we have now considered separately the

chief causes of unbelief; but they are not necessarily separated, and may often be found united in a single individual, thus rendering his unbelief more hopelessly profound.

I will not, therefore, dwell longer on them. Common sense should suffice. It has found expression in the words of a writer of note: "As, in the matter of poetry, we may fear to be wrong if we do not think like the great poets, so, when we treat of faith, we must fear to be mistaken if we do not think like the Saints." Moreover, religion calls us all to one solemn rendezvous, *the tomb*. We must, on our death beds, judge between the sincerity and validity of Catholicism, and the sincerity and validity of unbelief. Have you ever found a Catholic who, in the supreme moment of his last agony, has denied his faith? But, on the contrary, how many unbelievers have pressed their pale lips to the wounds of Jesus! How many unbelieving souls have implored and obtained pardon at the last moment! How many poor unhappy creatures have then blessed what once they cursed; have adored Him Whom once they refused to acknowledge. And what may we learn from this? That we must ever hope, always go on trusting, even in spite of all the efforts of unbelief to ruin us. Yes, let us hope, for all is not yet lost: those who rise against God will be overthrown. The clouds pass, but the sun remains.

Lacordaire has observed that the obscuring of the truth in great minds is not always fatal, but is often a sign that the mercy of God is near, of God Who will have all the glory of their conversion, that man may thus acknowledge himself as nothing and that he owes everything to God.

And what is true as to great men and great minds, is true also as to the people. God allows

error to develop itself before Him to its utmost limits, letting it go its own way, because, left alone, it leads to nothing. Then it is that the fate of nations and of people is weighed, then they are obliged to choose between that which is not, and that which is; either to believe all, or to deny all; to die in ignominy, or to triumph with the truth. The story of the past is the pledge of the future. Yes, brethren, a day will come, when truth, which ever exists, will be enthroned on the ruins of the negation of unbelief. But in order that these our hopes be fulfilled, we must raise our eyes to Heaven and pray, fervently pray. Oh, brethren, there is no one but God. Man alone is not sufficient. It is God Who gives the believer a particle of that truth of which He has the fulness. It is God Who lays a continual siege to poor erring souls, Who draws them with gentle but irresistible sweetness, till they raise themselves to Heaven and receive a ray of His light, as the tiny flower a drop of dew. But *how* do they obtain it? By prayer. Prayer is the lever which places the powers of our Lord God at the disposal of man; prayer is the channel by means of which our miseries and weaknesses escape, and by means of which we receive abundant consolation. "To pray, hoping; and to hope, praying." This, brethren, is the motto of the true Christian. But religion, now, as always, requires something more than words to obtain its acceptance by unbelievers; it requires that living preaching which is called *example*. Yes, if we are Christians by principle, we must also be Christians in practice. Christians must lead a really Christian life. This will be the best answer to unbelievers. Our works must never give the lie to our faith. In this way we may enlighten, convince, persuade, and lead to God the enemies of religion. A weeping

woman one day presented herself before a missioner, saying, "Father, my husband is an unbeliever, he believes in nothing. What must I do to convert him?" "Pray to God with faith." "I have prayed much," she said. Then he said: "Give alms." "This, too, I have done for a long time." "Now listen to me attentively, my child," said the missioner, "be always gentle, sweet, and amiable with him, just as religion is good, sweet, and amiable, so that he may never have cause to complain of you, and this will convert him. It will make him ask himself, 'Whence does my wife obtain so much virtue, so much goodness, and so much strength?' And to his own question he will be obliged to concede that this virtue and this goodness come from that Jesus Whom you adore. Thus he will end by adoring Him with you."

Oh, yes, my brethren, the most efficacious means of converting poor erring souls is to pray for them, and to encourage them by a good example. For their seeing us always good, always sweet, always amiable, will ask themselves, From whence comes such goodness, such sweetness, such affection? And, for their answer, they will be obliged to look heavenward, to turn to religion, and, together with us, will themselves embrace it.

Let us, brethren, give the erring a taste of that sweetness, something of that immense sweetness of delight which awaits us above in the bosom of our good God. So shall we be doing them a great service, and at the same time procure for ourselves the greatest consolation, for that happiness is pure which consists in consoling others.

Oh, my God, deign to impress upon Christians the duty of this divine mission, multiply these true Christians in my dear country, because it is only by this gentle method that they can bring

back to Thee our erring brethren. Oh, my God, be ever with them and be ever with us, as Thou didst manifest Thyself one day to Thy disciples, who knew Thee in the breaking of bread, which Thou didst share with them, who knew Thee through the infinite mystery of Thy ineffable charity. Oh, my God, Thou seest it, the darkness of error blinds them. Oh, Jesus, Sun of Truth, Sun of Justice, Sun of Charity, Sun of Goodness, so shed Thy light over the darkness of earth that none may be excluded from the influence of the glory of its hallowed and hallowing rays.

XV.

THE WORKING CLASSES.

BRETHREN, there is in society a class of men who pass quickly through many phases, subject to varied and sudden changes, being now venerated, now despised, now loved, yet anon hated—a class who have been regarded by society at one time as a pledge of public safety; at another as a source of danger! now, as a principle of life; again, as an element of dissolution; a class whose needs, aspirations, and tendencies engross, for the most part, the minds and attention of the politicians, philanthropists, and political economists of the day, all of whom unite in saying that this is *the* important question for present solution.

And who are these men? Ah, you have already guessed, for their name is dear to you, and you love them, as I do. It is the working-men. God be praised! the working-man finds, even in our day, some generous hearts to love him, some who exert themselves to raise him to his true dignity. But, unhappily, he is still surrounded by many enemies, one part of whom oppress, while the other flatters him; but both unite in making him their

victim. The former are those heartless employers of labour who see in the working man, not a brother, but only an instrument of produce, a machine of flesh and blood, more or less intelligent certainly, but which they make use of as long as it suits their purpose, and then claim to be free to fling on one side at pleasure. The latter are those who, seeing that they cannot divert his labour to their own advantage, seduce him with the opiate of socialistic doctrines. They are for ever talking to him of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality. They propose to make him sovereign, to administer justice in his name, and to manage his exchequer; in short, to captivate him, not as good patriots, by means of good counsels, but as bad sons, to whom the very names of *duty* and *sacrifice* are odious. The poor man, finding himself thus despised on the one hand, flattered and deceived on the other, and provoked now to complain of and bemoan his condition, now to rage and angry passions, cries aloud from his heart—Is there then no one who loves or cares for me? Yes, there is One. Only listen with your wonted courtesy, and you shall hear. It is a subject that requires delicate treatment; but I trust I shall be emboldened to tell you the saving truth, the truth which alone can save and console you.

Who will console the working-man? Who will soften the bitterness of his lot? Who will bind up his bleeding wounds?

Many come forward in response to these questions. First comes the man of culture. Approaching the working-man, he says: "You are sad, because, in order to provide bread for yourselves and your families, your are obliged to work from morning till night. But, listen to what I

have to tell you. The land of our earth is divided into mountains and rivers. The former provide the rivers, which they receive as rain, and with which they fertilize the soil; those beautiful rivers, cradled in the lap of the eternal valleys, and bearing beauty and life in their undying course to all within reach of their beneficent influence; the life-giving rivers which, but for the mountains, would have no existence. Well, it is the same in society. The rich are the mountains, you are the valleys. Be comforted, then, for this is your appointed place in the scheme of creation." At these words the poor man looks up at him sadly, then, with the averted eyes of hope cast to the ground, his tears flow afresh, and more bitterly even than before.

Then comes the economist, doubtless better inspired than the author of the valley and mountain theory. Let us hear one of them, Thiers. "We have made great progress," he says. "Labour, freed from many impediments, and illuminated by science, has become at once more active and more fertile. We have seen the interest of capital fall from six to four per cent., the price of articles of consumption decrease co-ordinately with the increase of the wages of labour, and a perception of the value of economy awakened in the breast of the working classes. Are we not tending in the right direction?" No doubt the theory is a beautiful one. But how can it satisfy the workingman, who stretches out his hand for a remedy, for happiness, and who naturally yearns to realize it, not twenty or thirty years hence in the persons of the next generation, but immediately in his own person. He is told to wait. Then he turns on the economist with a fierce disgust, mingled with contempt, for he cannot endure that the irony of science should crown his long and cruel misery

with a remedy that is no remedy for *him*, and a happiness that can never find a home in *his* heart.

But now there comes forward a philosopher who writes on religion, nature, duty, liberty, and patriotism. Ah! his words will surely be sweeter and better inspired. See, benevolence is stamped on his countenance. Will he not, perforce, charm the sons of toil by the captivating eloquence of his words, burning with enthusiasm and love? Listen, now, as the words of hope and consolation fall on their eager ears and aching hearts. "My friend," he says to the working man, "you are filled with sadness, and with good cause, for your lot is not a pleasant one. But what would you? To whom will you turn? There is no one able to console you in your trouble. In infancy you were taught to resort to prayer, to God; but this is an error, a folly. God is too far off to hear, and His majesty and state too great to lend an ear to you. Again, even did He hear you He could not grant your request, since He has made general laws to which He could not make exceptions without subverting the whole order of the universe. It is, therefore, utterly useless to look for help from heaven." "Then," returns his indignant hearer, "you rob me of every, even my last, hope. What must I do? Whence shall I seek aid?" "From us," reply politicians. It is we who occupy ourselves with the working classes. We have remedial and ample laws and projects under consideration, and in the course of a few years even the artisan and labourer will have his heart's desire." But, it is now a long time that you have been affecting to have my interests at heart, and to be promoting them. For many a long day you have been assuring my order of this as a fact. Yet how can we believe you? We know of no change for all your talking, but are ever 'waiting.' In feigning to occupy yourself on

our behalf, you have become rich, *very* rich, while we have remained poor. Thus your very abundance is an insult to our misery."

By brethren, to these words of the poor working man there is no reply; they are unanswerable. The politician can say, "you are ungrateful. You can go to the ballot-box and deposit in it your sheet of paper recording the name of your chosen representative. You are enfranchised. Is not that a benefit?" But here he must stop. He can say no more. Yet the son of toil sees clearly the inadequacy of the reply, and still persists: "But of whom shall I seek consolation in my lot? If I am always to work, who is to lighten my burden? If there is any power on earth or in heaven capable of conferring happiness on me, then show it." And the politician is mute.

Then others, who shall be nameless, press their solution of the problem, and thus they address him: "Why go about seeking consolation, dignity, fortune? You have already the elements of all these within your own selves—in your strength, your power. Observe the muscular vigour of your arms. Why, you have only to move to cause the earth to tremble! You have only to organize your forces to effect the overthrow of your masters, the usurpers of your rights. You have only to precipitate yourselves on the civilized world to reduce it to powder. But the workman, if he have good sense, replies: "Right, not force, makes law. Not force, but love, gains the mastery over others. Man's ideal is not that of the brute creation. Leave me, therefore, for this is not the greatness which I seek." Thus his cry is still the same—Where shall I find consolation? How lighten the burden of my lot? If there be such succour, let it show itself.

Well, brethren, that power does present itself,

and it is no other than religion. It is religion alone that can succour and console the working classes, for religion alone unfolds to them as well their own true dignity as that of labour. And first, it shows the dignity of labour, of labour itself, the source of true consolation. It shows him that no class of society has such striking features of resemblance to God. We see God at *work* in creation. His first act, when He created the angels, was work. He worked when He laid the foundations of the earth, when He made the sun, when He stretched out the firmament, when He created man out of dust. He created and fashioned the world, but man must cultivate it, and the very earth over which he bends in daily toil bears traces of its Divine Creator. No, the labourer is not an accursed thing, not the only worker. God is the primary, man but the secondary worker. In laying the foundations of the world, God left, so to speak, His work unfinished. Not that He did not weigh, number, and measure everything after His own inscrutable plan; but, having created His aggregate of beings, with their properties and laws, He yet left the completion of the work to man himself.

Everywhere we find germs of life. But labour is necessary to make them fructify. Everywhere there is stone and metal; but God leaves it to the hand of labour to extract and collect them. Everywhere around us are various forces. But He wills that the workman arouse and direct them. And herein is the true source of consolation to the working-man; he is God's companion in labour; leaning on the spade man needs only to raise his eyes heavenwards to see his Divine prototype. God is the Creator, he the modifier; God commences, he is the finisher. Yet we see it above all in the work of redemption. A blight, a

curse had fallen on work, and it had to be raised again to its real dignity. To this end God made man Himself, worked as a poor man thirty years. One day, during the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, messengers came to say that the Redeemer, the Restorer of society, the Messiah was come. But *how* did He come? Was it as the leader of an invincible army? as the propounder of new doctrines from some exalted seat in the schools? or, perhaps, seated on the most brilliant throne of the universe! Mystery of love! The Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind willed to come as a poor Babe, poorer than the babes of other working men. His mother is a poor working woman, His father a working man, living by the fruits of his labour, and His first adorers were poor shepherds, and, therefore, labourers. Behold the most beautiful sight offered by earth to heaven, an incarnate God, born amidst labour, and growing up and passing His life in the same sphere. Thus He came not as a great Emperor, nor at the head of an invincible army, neither as a great and learned doctor, but as a poor little Child, in the humblest guise of suffering poverty, living and working unknown to the world in a carpenter's shop, the ever-ready and constant help of His poor working parents. Thus, He who was Son of God willed, before redeeming him, to win man to truth, and raise him to his real dignity, by teaching him that happiness does not consist in pleasures and enjoyments, commonly so called, but is obtainable only through duties exactly performed, and sacrifices readily made. Thus, before He would redeem us, Jesus lived for us, a model of work, of labour, showing us at once its dignity, its virtue, its rewards, its happiness. The very hand which created the world applied itself therein, for thirty years, to labour. From that

Divine contact what glory is there not reflected on the material touched by the workman's hand! See, O working-man, the same God who is held up for the adoration of the world has been with you, espoused your order, made Himself your equal. Do not, then, chafe or lament over your lot. The remembrance of the workshop of Nazareth floats on the river of time through all the centuries, and sheds around you a divine halo.

But there is more. Our Divine Lord, after thirty years of toil, became a labourer among souls, and worked out, at infinite pains and suffering, our redemption. But the application of this work to man's needs, as that of creation, He did not will to be completed in His *own* work, but chose twelve associates, who, in the persons of themselves and their successors, should apply the Precious Blood of redemption. But from whom did He choose the twelve? From among the rich or the learned ones of the world? No; He chose them from among the poor — the working-people — on the shores of Gennesaret. And these simple working-men have conquered and regenerated the world, a task which philosophy had essayed and failed in. What the learned ones failed to accomplish was done by two working-men, Peter, the fisherman of Galilee, and Paul, the weaver of Tarsus. They subdued the world. On their shoulders was erected the whole edifice of Christianity. O working-men, do you not see that you possess in your order the King of kings and Lord of lords. The rich man cannot say: "Like my God I am rich; the riches I use were used before by Him." Nor can the man of learning say: "My God has honoured the school from which I come." Nor the powerful: "My God held this office before committing it to me." But you can say, and say with noble pride: "My God

has done that which I do." Yes, the kingdom of Jesus Christ was a carpenter's shop, His sceptre an instrument of labour. Jesus Christ was a working-man.

These words alone should suffice to solve the social question, for it should inspire the working-man with patience and resignation, and impart strength and consolation, while it should inspire the rich with respect and charity towards their poorer brethren.

But we must not stop here. Before going any further, let me address myself to working-men. You must not forget that you owe everything to Jesus Christ and His religion. For, before His time, what was labour? Make those who would tear you away from Jesus tell you what it was. They must confess that it was dishonourable and slavish. The indolent cast it forth as an obstacle to happiness and a badge of shame. True, the plough of Cincinnatus was celebrated, yet Aristotle calls work illiberal, while Plato tells us that in Greece he who gave himself to work was held unworthy of the name of citizen. Cicero calls labourers people of no account and barbarous. Terence assures us that to secure respect one must live idly, and the graphic and satirical pen of Juvenal shows how wide was the gulf between rich and poor, and how wretched and desolate was the condition of the latter.

This hatred and degraded view of work is still perpetuated in countries where the Gospel is a stranger. The Brahmin, or highest caste of the Hindoos, would consider himself contaminated if obliged to do any labour. The Indians of America will do no work themselves, but relegate it to their women, whom they treat as slaves. And, my brethren, even in our own midst, by the admission of a celebrated Review, "La Revue des

deux Mondes," labour is honoured by word only, and, while men bow and demean themselves before the rich, they look askance on the man whose hands are hardened with toil. I repeat it, therefore, religion alone begets a genuine love for work, which it sees resplendent with serene majesty, and clothed with a modest pride, emanations from our Lord God that form a celestial halo around the head of the poor working man. Religion gives him consolation by giving meaning to his work. Dear brethren, work which is worthy of the name, must not be restricted to mere material force, but must also have its moral tendency, the loftier aim of following out the real end of man. Otherwise, human acts in labour would be reduced to the level of those of a machine, the machinist on a par with the machine. Where, then, would be the difference between them? Very little; both unite for the one result, with the only difference that one works for wages, and the other does not; the one is an absolute, the other a conditional slave. Now, say, shall this be the only difference between you? No; if it appeared thus to the ancients and still seems so in the estimation of some in our own times, it most certainly does not do so in the sight of religion. Where these men see only physical acts, muscular tension, religion recognizes a motive tension of will. She does not lose sight of the efforts of a free being encircled with an iron band, but bursts the bond, and, opening up to his gaze a vaster horizon, telling him of another and more abundant remuneration in the splendid and illimitable future, the home of his true destiny, she points out to him Jesus Christ, saying: "Work, poor man, yet not for the food which perisheth, but for that which endureth throughout all eternity." And St. Paul says to

him: "Our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly, an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv., 17). It is not the things which we see, but those we do not see, which are the most estimable, "for the things which are seen are temporal, but things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv., 18). Thus religion comforts him by spiritualizing matter, and showing him heaven as the reward of labour.

What, in fact, is religion's idea of labour? First, a means of virtue; secondly, expiation. Ah, brethren, we do not sufficiently appreciate all the beauty contained in this idea of work. Man raises himself by work. By sin he lost the life of grace, the true life, and was condemned to death, not temporal only, but eternal. Yet from the moment his labour becomes expiatory, which, by means of the labours and merits of Christ, it may become, man is enabled to regain his lost dignity. He who works is said to gain his livelihood; and he only deserves one who will work for it, as St. Paul says: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. iii., 10). Thus work becomes an expiation, by means of which man can free himself, not from material, but even from moral death.

One day a traveller met a man, bent with fatigue and toiling, with such strength as he had left, under a burning sun. "My friend," said the former, "what dost thou gain by this work?" And the other, raising his eyes to heaven, replied, "I expiate my sins." "But how canst thou endure this fatigue? Surely thou findest no pleasure in it?" Then the penitent raised his tearful eyes once more and replied: "Pleasure! Ah, pray to God for me, for I have sinned, and know pleasure no more as you mean it. I can be happy

only when God accepts my labours in expiation for my sins.

Now, my brethren, who was this practical penitent? It was no other than St. Paul. And I humble myself before this man who gained his livelihood in so noble a manner, and in so doing regained the lost life of grace, the true life of man. When God looks on that brow, stamped with His own image, and sees it covered with sweat and dust, and when He gazes on those hands made hard and rough in so noble a cause, ah! then He forgets the sinner, and sees only His Divine Son in the person of the penitent, whose courage He blesses, whose strength He increases, whose undertakings He prospers, and whom He delights to fill with a sweetness of satisfaction to which all others are strangers.

But work is not only a means of expiation; it is something more. Christianity reveals it to us as also a sacrifice. Thus the Christian workman says to Jesus: "It was Thy sufferings and fatigue, Thy faintness and weariness which procured my salvation. Deign, then, graciously to accept my poor labours, and, after having provided for the wants of my own family, grant me the power to help and comfort others.

Looked at in this light, work is divested of all idea of disgrace, and burthensomeness is expelled it. Labour it most truly is, but it is no less truly labour sweetened by consolation; it is a penance, but,at the same time, it is penance steeped in glory, for it is consecrated to God.

Moreover, free labour has carried civilization everywhere. Christianity has changed the ancient badge of slavery into a crown of liberty, intelligence, and glory, which first bore abundant fruit in the East. St. Basil, the father of numerous cenobites, exhorted all, saying: "Let us labour,

raising our hearts to God, so that thus our labour may become prayer;" Nor did those early and zealous contemplatives neglect the holy advice. The cells of those monks, whose thoughts were ever fixed on God, were like those of the bees, where each bore in his hand the wax taper of work, and on his lips the honey of prayer. Then, later on, the West saw arise those agricultural societies, which, under the rule of their holy father St. Benedict, were, as the Protestant Guizot, among others, affirm, the real cultivators of Europe, as also her architects and litterateurs. In the present day we have methods unknown to them, and instruments of which they had no conception; yet they erected monuments which we are compelled to admire, without being able to imitate, while of their rich and eloquent language we lisp but a few words, unable to add to, nay, to approach it. Our literary efforts are dull, for they lack the spirit of faith. In those days labour was undertaken and guided by faith; and faith can remove mountains. But labour now, like the world around it, has lost the spirit of faith, and we cannot raise a grain of sand.

"But this is a lie, or ignorance," I hear someone saying. "Why, we have bored tunnels through mountains, joined seas to seas, and are on the way to even greater achievements!"

Ah, my brethren, though our work has attained these magnificent results, is it necessarily great? When has work ever been great when unaccompanied by virtue? I do not deny it, the industry of our age is wonderful. It delights in the contemplation of its own achievements, and summons men from every quarter of the world to admire its magnificence. But, though its hands be full of riches, and its raiment gorgeous and luxuriant, those garments cover miserable and ignominious

sores, and its gigantic strides leave terrible foot-prints in their way. Its splendours stupify us. Yet, consider my friends, at what expense of virtue and neglect of sacrifice these apparently splendid results of industry have been obtained, at what treasures of life they have been procured. Modern industry, forsooth! Ah, yes; while you are congratulating yourselves, I, my brethren, am weeping over the ruins with which your way is paved. You count the medals and crowns, I the ruins. Of what value is prosperity and opulence acquired by dishonest practices, by trampling justice under foot, by wickedness, by turpitude undiscovered? O, my brethren, the labour of the age has an indubitable tendency to demoralization, and ends by expelling morality from the heart of man. Let us not deceive ourselves. Work does, and must do, one of two things: either it raises or exalts us, or it lowers and degrades us. Labour is an instrument either of morality or of social degradation. The flower of your youth, the best of your blood, your strength, the very vitals of your city and country you devote to work. And what return will this labour yield you? Will its schools be schools of morality or of immorality? Will they yield up their youths, the thews and sinews of the country, chaste and disciplined, or perverted by error and vice? God forbid that I should wish to hurl from this pulpit an anathema against modern industry! But when there is question of the welfare of the working man, the poor sons of the people, must I not point out to them the rocks on which they would dash themselves and make shipwreck of their existence.

Well, the evil is not in labour, nor in the organization of labour; but it is in the fact that labour has been paganized. Jesus Christ has now been banished from work, and consequently

no longer gives it a moral tone, is no longer its motive power, no longer directs it: and hence the working man in banishing Jesus has banished the only one capable of bettering his lot, which is, therefore, as sad and pitiable as in the days of acknowledged paganism. Work then was servile and a badge of slavery, since it was deemed degrading to the honour of citizenship. To-day, though the working man is nominally free, yet he is in reality more truly enslaved than actual slaves, whose slavery was that of the body only, whereas these men are mentally enslaved by their subservience to the opinions of others, their abject cringing to human respect, which dominates their lives. With faith vanished, and no longer believing in a Divine Providence, the workman sees nothing before him but a blind destiny, which raises one man and debases another, a heartless fatality which he questions in vain, and against which he is ever engaged in a futile rebellion, but to which he has invariably to submit. Viewed from this standpoint labour is verily a slavery pure and simple, under which the labourer must groan as under the lash of a tyrant.

Yet, despite these issues so vastly, inconceivably important, how many there are, alas, who can discuss the "labour question" with no more heart than they would a problem in geometry! But this weighty, this terrible problem is to be by no means so easily solved. Oh, my dear brethren, do you not hear the cry of the sons of toil, of the children of the people, as from the very bottom of their hearts it wends its way from earth to heaven? And, tell me, is it the cry of joy, or the echo from a well of sadness? Is it the voice of pain or of menace? Ah, too often, alas! it is the word of this last and of rebellion. Oh, the world

is full of groaning and sighing, of a grief which emanates, not so much from a deprivation of material comforts or creatures, as from still deeper, more urgent, all important necessities, the absolute needs of an immortal soul. These groans, these sighs, tell us of a secret and interior suffering in the innermost depths of the heart of the poor man. Yet how is this? It is simply this. The modern doctrines have made him God's enemy, or, rather, have proclaimed to him that God is his enemy.

Thus they have banished Jesus Christ from the workshop, and from the bosom of the family, and while promising the poor deluded man happiness, have instead necessarily brought him to despair. In a future life he no longer believes; Paradise he has long since relegated to the land of fable; hence he naturally looks for all his happiness in this world. This, too, generally leads him to drink, and drink to drunkenness. He cringes to the great and the rich for his share of the pleasures of life, such joys as the world has to offer, and then, when these fail him, the storm of anger and resentment wage disastrous war within his breast, and, launching invectives against man, blasphemies against God, he arms himself against both God and society.

Of what avail is it, my brethren, that certain societies pretend to insure bread, clothing, and even wages to the workman during "bad times," if they also deprive him of his conscience, of his faith in God, of his hope in a future world, in short, of all those things, which alone can and do raise the working-man far higher than all the temporal (and temporary) relief from the hand of the stranger or the coffers of a "Union" or Guild. And when there is no longer a curb sufficient to control his passions, when he has

been robbed of the still small voice that alone was able to arrest him on the brink of the precipice, when they have taken from him all that could shed a little balm and sweetness over his griefs, what will he do then? He will squander his money on ignoble objects, at midnight orgies, and the substance that ought to be devoted to the support of the family he will devote to debauchery, wherein he will ruin his health, lose his liberty, and, unless someone step forward and save him, become the ready tool of some villain seeking to make a stepping-stone to his own profit of the poor lost and ruined working-man. My brethren, we must save him, and this is especially the work of youth. Yes, for youth loves generous actions, and where shall we find one more generous than this.

O, youth, full of hope, faith, and pious impulses, you, with your ideal enthusiasm, must save the poor workman; you must rescue him from moral as from material poverty. See him, covered with rags, as he is, outwardly and inwardly; rags are those quondam clothes that scarce can be made to hang around his toiling limbs, and rags, very rags, are those false and moribund conceptions of faith and morals which shut out God's light from his imperilled but immortal soul. Listen to him as he cries aloud for help. See him now enraged because it comes not, and, in his anger cherishing dreams, chimeras which, worse than illusions, are luring him on to destruction which, unless he be arrested, is inevitable.

Ah, my brethren, let the lot of the thrice unhappy workman touch us and move us to compassion. Yes, we must go to him, approach him with both love and respect. If we hold out our

hand to him, and greet him with a pleasant smile, we may yet save him.

Brethren, there is a fact which is becoming daily more evident, and that is the efficacy of Christianity in the hearts of both rich and poor in drawing them together, and cementing their union.

I can fearlessly assert that, with few exceptions, the Christian, the sincere Christian, really loves the working-man, and rejoices to render him both material and moral relief. The materialist, on the contrary, is too often prodigal in his own expenses, yet seldom devoted to the working classes or willing to aid them. Not only have I, but you yourselves have seen him *speak* much and employ no little time anent labour and the working classes. But why so much noise in their favour? Would you know the real reason? It was to gain some decoration, some cross, a more elevated post, or suffrages, which if not won by deeds, he is determined shall be procured, at least, by words and friendly appearances. This latter is, indeed, a very cheap way of purchasing the good will of those for whom he actually does nothing, whose temporal needs he never supplies, whose sorrows he never soothes, whose moral education he utterly ignores, or thinks of only to destroy by the poisonous breath of his false and insidious doctrines.

And it is the same in the working as in other classes. The sincere Christian, the workman faithful to his religion, desires to ameliorate his condition by the labour of his own hands, by the sweat of his own brow, and not by injustice, turbulence, and revolt against authority. Happy thus within himself he no longer meditates

suicide, or looks with the eye of envy on those more fortunate than himself.

Take two workmen: the one faithful to his religion, the other an unbeliever. You will assuredly find the former the more contented with his lot, a sober man, less subject to sickness and poverty, more moral, a better husband, father, brother, son, a better friend and neighbour, in short, a better man and a better citizen. The latter on the contrary, you will find regardless of the laws of justice and duty, neglectful in his work, intemperate in his habits, and void of honesty in his dealings as in principles. Nor is this a rhetorical figure, but alas, a simple truth, patent to the observation of all.

Hence, when the sentiment of religion fades and decays in a city or among a people, then the public houses and all resorts of vice and immorality are full to overflowing.

Oh, what an illimitable responsibility do they incur who use their influence to deprive the poor sons of the people of their faith.

My friends, we must no longer deceive ourselves. We are nearing, are rapidly approaching a most terrible social crisis, a crisis pregnant with far greater danger than a political one. But what is the cause of this imminent danger? Its origin is found in our want of religious principle, and the fault lies at the door of those who desire to suppress, and of those who renounce faith. This, however, not only degrades labour, but it renders it unnatural and causes it to produce results which it ought never to beget. In order to perfect man we must appeal to his dual nature, not forgetting that that nature is not only material, but also spiritual, intellectual, and moral.

That political economy is in error, therefore,

which ignores religion and recognizes only that which is material, the creatures of earth only. They err who teach the people to recognize no God but gold, no laws but those of interest. These are the men who teach the people that the chief end of man is that of pleasure, which he may procure by any means whatsoever provided only he keep clear of the law and the police; these are the men who open the doors of those infamous houses where are sought the satisfactions of illicit cupidity; in short, these are the men who cause those atrocious crimes which make us tremble with horror. Many exclaim against the working classes, yet it is not they who are to blame, it is not the people. The real culprits are not always those who are publicly so regarded, dragged before courts of justice, imprisoned, and transported. No; the really guilty are those who robbed the people of the principles of religion, faith in God, and hope in the future. These are the real enemies of society, of their country, and, more particularly, of the working classes, into whose ears they lose no opportunity of instilling those insidious principles which can and do result only in those acts, those crimes, which bring about the dissolution of society. "Ah," they say to the working-man, "you are patient because you anticipate justice; but there is no justice! You look for a future; but there is none! You pour out your tears and heap up your sighs and your misery, and lay all the sufferings of yourself and your family at the foot of the cross, a holocaust to God. But, know that there is no God!" To whom the poor man, "If, then, heaven be an illusion, the earth at least is a reality, and I will possess it; if there be no future, then at all events I will enjoy the

present." See, here, the danger to society. But the sophists, having disseminated their pernicious theories, what do they ever do to succour the poor or improve their condition? Perchance they will speak of *duty*? But the poor will now deride that as an empty word, and exclaim: "Ah, yes, no doubt my duty is to suffer, and yours—to enjoy. I am to suffer because I am poor, am I? My duty, therefore, arises from my state, which I must quickly change." Perhaps, then, an appeal is made to their *interest*. To this they readily reply: "Oh, yes, all that you say may be true. But why should we suffer in silence? One man alone may be easily crushed; but we count our millions, and if we combine to overthrow thrones and authority who will be able to stand against us?" Terrible words! But are they not the logical outcome of the socialistic principles which, once admitted, bear all this as their natural fruit? Yes, these are, indeed, the necessary consequences of those fatal theories which are in reality the germs of the dissolution of society. And more, brethren, if an effectual remedy be not speedily applied, these moribund seeds will fructify into the complete ruin of society, and of the very people themselves. O, my people, I must speak freely to you. If misfortune should one day overtake you, it shall not be for want of warning. Take note, then, O people and working men, you especially, take note what happens in times of rebellion and insurrection. If you raise it, you must necessarily either succeed or fail. Supposing that you fail, punishment will overtake you, and your distress will be worse than before. If, on the other hand, you should succeed in your enterprise, then, on the morrow of your victory, you will see stepping out from their hiding places others

who will rob you of your triumph, and, of all the good things snatched from the flames by *your* hands, not one will remain to you, but others will enjoy them at your expense. And to add to your distress you will have to bear your chagrin as best you may, with your little ones crying on one side of you for the bread you had hoped, but now find yourself unable to give them, and their mother, on the other, weeping and disconsolate, since she cannot dry their tears of present hunger nor rescue them from the starvation which stares them in the face. You will always find that the first authors of rebellion become the mere tools or stepping-stones of others who step in at the right moment to gather the fruit of others' labour, to reap the corn which they did not sow. I know, my poor people, that in order to deceive you they raise the cry of "Progress." But progress, if it be true progress, has its conditions. Now, the first is, that it be in accordance with *common sense*. But those who would have you see enchantment in any political event, and fortune in some new theory of political economy, are devoid of common sense and in the wrong. Limit, then, your aspirations to the attainable, and learn to distinguish between friends and agitators. Secondly, real progress is always in harmony with justice. Put no faith, therefore, in those who seek to dazzle you with vain splendours, and to expel the principles of morality and religion from your hearts and from your minds. Believe, and remember always, that these specious theories are very chimeras, fables invented by those who would obtain your services to-day, but will indubitably forget you on the morrow. Lastly, there is another condition attached to true progress, and that is *virtue*. We must forget our

duties neither to God nor to our neighbour. When he departs from God, and no longer looks on Him as his end, then man goes backwards, not forwards, and instead of progress you have a retrograde movement. Common sense, justice, and virtue, then, these are the necessary conditions of true progress. You may, if you observe them, be poor, but you will be honest. You may be poor, but not unhappy; and in the hour of death you will be able, with peace and confidence, to call your family round you and make your last will, leaving them a splendid bequest. You will not, like the rich, have gold, splendid mansions, and large estates to leave behind you. But you will leave in their minds that which is far more precious. To your daughter, who has no other dowry, you will leave modesty, and that lovely flower, the lily of holy purity, itself of infinitely greater price than all the wealth of the Indies and of the world, and the most sublime of all virtues To your sons you will leave the love of honest labour, that true patrimony and proud independence which neither seeks nor desires any other, together with hope, which renews the energy as the oasis of the desert—the strength of the weary traveller, who, refreshed, then goes on again rejoicing. To others you will leave your example, and therein the secret of happiness, these are things you should engrave on your hearts.

And here, with one last word, I will conclude. Once, when an illustrious prisoner was confined with his two sons, they, having finished their prison task, went to show their labour to their father. Embracing them, he said: "Be ever diligent, my sons, always united, and always good. *Work* will be your consolation, union your

strength, and prayer your hope." And I say the same to you. O, working-men cultivate the spirit of work, be united, be religious. Work will give you a proud independence; union will be your strength; and religion will be your consolation, comfort, and dignity.

Labour, Union, Religion: This should be the motto of every working-man.

XVI.

MARY.

THERE is a name which sounds ineffably sweet to our ears, a name which causes the heart to beat with tenderest emotion, a name which awakens long-forgotten memories, and fills our eyes with tears, the name of *mother*. And this, because there is nothing more exquisite, more tender, more affectionate in this vale of tears than the heart of a mother. Her devotion exceeds all other devotion. She heeds no obstacles, no difficulties, and, forgetful of herself, will walk, if needs be, through fire and water to rescue her child or save it from danger. Her beneficent influence is felt in all the dangers and exigencies of life; on the battle-field, in the storm at sea, by the young soldier lying wounded on the field, by the shipwrecked sailor, by the poor wanderer, an exile in foreign lands. If these have preserved their *faith*, if they still believe in the immortality of the soul, their first cry is, "My God, my God, have pity on me and help me!" and immediately afterwards the thought takes shape, "Oh, if only my mother were here!" Alas!

the unfortunate's mother cannot hear that cry of anguish; she is far away, perhaps dead, that poor mother. But the Christian knows a mother who never dies, who, always listening, ever hears the voice of her children, from whatever quarter they appeal to her. Time, place, and circumstances are all annihilated by the omnipotence of the maternal love of this best of all mothers, the mother given us by Jesus Himself when dying on the Rood. This mother is Mary.

Then she was standing at the foot of the cross, overwhelmed in the vast ocean of her grief; now she is in heaven, all beautiful as the light of morn, as full of charms and graces as a garden is full of flowers, and shining more brightly than any star. Her garments sparkle with all the lustre of a thousand precious gems, while heaven and earth unite in singing the praises of their Queen, the Virgin-Mother. But in the meantime, her splendours, her triumphs, do not prevent her thinking of us, do not deter her from listening to the groans of those who suffer, or from answering the prayers which ascend to her heavenly throne, bathed in and radiating the celestial light of her maternal love. Hence our devotion and love for Mary, in spite of the malice of the wicked, who oppose it with insults and ridicule, always glows with ardent flame on the altar of her children's hearts. But since we live in an age when it is not enough to love, but in which we must also defend what we love, permit me briefly to explain the reasons upon which we rest our love and devotion to Mary.

Unhappily even among Christians, the cultus of Mary is opposed by some, whose minds, being perverted, pretend that devotion to her is superstition and idolatry. And as it is in the name of reason that the enemies of this devotion present

themselves, it is this same fallacious reasoning which, leaving behind me all the subtleties of philosophy I wish to combat. And what I ask of you, my brethren, is heart, much heart!

Oh, my God, for love of that Blessed One whom Thou has given us for mother, assist me to-day by Thy omnipotent power, give Thine own efficacy to my words, causing them to penetrate every mind, and to carry thither the full weight of conviction, and persuasion to every heart.

The devotion, love, and worship that we give to Mary, in a word, her cultus, rest upon two truths that no one, with any good sense, can doubt or deny. The first is her dignity—her dignity as Mother of God. The second is the power she has, in consequence of this dignity. It is a dogma of faith that the Son of God, in order to redeem man, chose to become man—that is, to take to Himself human nature, thus becoming "truly man." But He did not choose to create this humanity anew, as when He created Adam; but chose, rather, to take it in a marvellous and pure manner in the womb of a mother, so that He not only became man like us, but became also our brother. Words cannot express the greatness and dignity of human nature, raised thus by this *hypostatic union* with the Divine nature, neither can mind conceive the dignity of a woman raised to the honour of being the Mother of God. Let us consider the importance of this fact. The woman who for nine months bore the Son of God Himself in her womb, who nourished Him with her milk, and on whose ears fell, from the Divine lips, the sweet name of mother, this woman is Mary. "Mary," says the gospel, with divine simplicity, Mary, of whom

was born Jesus; "*de qua natus est Jesus.*" After this, what can compare with Mary? Must not all else sink into nothingness before the name of Mary? All that is said of her is insufficient to make us understand her perfection. Is she full of heavenly graces? But this is not to be wondered at, since she was created to be the Mother of God. Was she conceived without sin? The very same logic would alone compel us to believe it, since she was destined to give material life to the Son of God. Was her life a model of every virtue, of every perfection? But we speak idly; we could not imagine otherwise of her who bore in her arms Holiness itself. Is her throne the most exalted after that of God, and do the angels celebrate her praises as the Queen of Heaven? Yes, certainly, it must be so, for she is the Mother of God. But, observe, not only is she Mother of God, but she is Mother of God more truly than other mothers are mothers of their sons; for these latter share their maternity with he father, whereas Mary shares hers with no one. Yes, her Son owes His human nature to her, and to her alone. It will be said that Mary did not give divine entity to Jesus Christ. But do other mothers give anything more than corporeal entity to their infants? Truly, then, is Mary Mother of God, for she is the Mother of Jesus, Who is the God-man. Although she gave to her Son only His human entity, yet that entity is essentially united to the Divine entity; and as the body and soul form but *one* man only, so the Divinity and humanity of Mary's Son form that union of the two natures which is called Christ. Therefore, Mary is most truly the Mother of God.

And how ought we to honour her? Undoubtedly with the honour due to the Mother of God. The accusation of idolatry, however, brought against

us by our Protestant brethren, is false, utterly without foundation; for while we are accused of *adoring* Mary, we do not *adore*, but *venerate* her. Adoration is for God alone, but veneration is a service of respect and love which we render towards those who merit it. Thus we venerate the heroes of our country, and those who lend lustre to its name, which veneration is reflected on their mothers. Now, if good sense allows us to venerate the heroes of our country, why should we not, in adoring the divine Founder of our holy religion, venerate also the Mother of this Founder? If the homage that a nation offers to its King extends also to the mother of that King, why should it not extend to Mary, whom Christ recognized and respected as His Mother, and to whom He was subject, "*erat subditus illis?*"

Not only are we justified in venerating Mary, but we also recognize her protection. Great is the power of the King, but great also is the power of the Mother, for she reigns in the Heart of her Son.

Mary, to speak accurately, is certainly not *omni*potent, it would be folly to think it, and blasphemy to affirm it; but she has much influence over the Heart of her divine Son, and, if it be not a dogma of faith, it is a logical consequence of her divine maternity. Hence we may legitimately invoke her aid.

But, why, say our opponents, why *pray* to Mary? Is it not enough to pray to Jesus? Has He not promised to hear our prayers Himself? Let us grant this. Yes, strictly speaking, it is enough to pray to Jesus; no other invocation is *absolutely necessary;* but, because a thing is not absolutely necessary, one ought not to conclude that it is useless, and, still less, that it is blameworthy.

Ah, brethern, our adversaries are in bad faith. They create imaginary dogmas in order to have the pleasure of contending against them. They resemble St. Augustine, who wrote of himself before his conversion, "I made a ghost of the Church, and, like a dog barked at it continually."

Why, therefore, need we dispute about the *necessity* of the cultus of Mary, when the Church only teaches it as *convenient* and *useful.*

Let objectors confute this if they can. But has not Jesus Christ promised to receive our prayers Himself? Yes, truly; but has He not told us to pray *one for another?* Has not the Holy Spirit, also, told us to pray for *one another?* And has not God commanded us to love one another? Do not those who are in Heaven pray for us? No one will deny it who has read St. Paul, where he promises his disciples to pray for them after his death. We are, therefore, justified in praying to Mary, and in doing so are acting in accordance with Holy Scripture.

The basis of the accusation made by those who dissent from us in claiming the aid of Mary consists in the false interpretation given to the word "*invoke.*" This, however, is not the case. We invoke God to employ His power, we invoke Mary to use her *intercession* with Jesus Christ. We invoke God that He may *command.* We invoke Mary that she may *pray*, that she may *supplicate.* Where, then, is the idolatry? Let us take a familiar example. A King has a wife whom he tenderly loves. His subjects desire a favour, or the poor ask an alms. Can they not turn to the Queen? Assuredly. And if the King, through her intercession, is gracious and condescending, granting, through her means, that which the

supplicants need, may they not justly consider her as the help of the weak, the succour of the poor? For surely no one could be found who should think that that King would be offended by such esteem for his Queen? This, however, is precisely our case. God alone can grant the favour; but He listens to the prayers of His Mother, for the sake of whose super-eminent and abundant merits He grants that which He would not have granted for ours. Then, having obtained some favour through the merits of Mary, may we not rightly, nay, do we not owe it to her, to express our gratitude and thankfulness to her? May we not, indeed, give her that title so often applied to her by the Catholic Church, and call her the Health of the sick, the Consolation of the afflicted? Must we, can we think that in so doing we offend Jesus? Oh, brethren, how strange is it to hear it said that in all this we go beyond the Scriptures! To me it seems that we do just the contrary. We have only to open them to find it so. The Archangel Gabriel, appearing to Mary to announce to her the mystery of the Incarnation, says: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women" (St. Luke i. 28). And what do we do but reiterate the angelic salutation? Our dissentient brethren on the other hand, range themselves rather with the fallen angels, to whom God said, in addressing their chief: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman" (Gen. iii 15). Again, we read in the gospel that when Elizabeth saw Mary come to visit her, she exclaimed, in a transport of joy: "Blessed art thou among women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" (St. Luke i. 42, 43). And we, honouring Mary, in

manifesting our gratitude, only follow the example of St. Elizabeth; but they, our poor Protestant brethren, resemble the Bethlehemites who, indeed, looked for the Messiah, yet rejected the Mother about to give Him birth. The Gospel tells us, moreover, that Mary answered Elizabeth in the prophetic words: "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." *Ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes* (St. Luke i., 48). But which generations fulfil these words of the Gospel? Is it the Catholic or Protestant generations that do so? I sincerely say that I have never been able to understand the latter in this particular. They raise in their churches monuments to men of note, while they rigidly exclude the image of Mary. But how can they celebrate the mysteries of our redemption without feeling moved with sympathy towards her who is so intimately connected with them? By the manger, as at the foot of the Cross, how can they help but feel their hearts warm towards her who heard Jesus' first cry of infancy, as His last of suffering manhood? Oh, brethren, you know it well, the Gospel is full of Mary, and we must either eliminate its most touching words, or fall on our knees before her. But, they object, if this be so, why do we not find this practice in the first days of the Church? Well, ask Rossi, the celebrated Roman antiquarian, ask him if he has not found in the catacombs traces of invocation and prayer to Mary; ask it, also, of the ancient liturgies. Everywhere you will find traces of this devotion, of this cultus of the Mother of God.

The Apostles themselves head the long and splendid list of Mary's panegyrists. Before the dispersion of the Sacred College they composed a symbol of faith, the profession of which should

distinguish the disciples of Jesus Christ. In this creed many dogmas are necessarily, for brevity's sake, omitted, yet Mary has a place there; and what a place! Her name is in company with that of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, born of the Virgin Mary. I believe in the Holy Ghost. Oh! what an august relationship, what a glorious connection, what unparalleled greatness: a God-given greatness which, beauteous and resplendent, shines forth uniquely in her. And after the Apostles, great men, and the Saints, the fathers and doctors of the Church, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Austin, in a word, all celebrate the miraculous birth which gave Jesus to Mary. St. Justin, the philosopher, who left the school of Plato to enter that of Christ, makes a comparison between Eve and Mary, in which he attaches as much importance to the benefits derived from Mary as to the evil derived from Eve. St. Irenaeus continues the parallel, saying, that Mary is become the regeneratrix of mankind, and that through her the generation of the blessed has succeeded that of the cursed. And Tertullian completes the comparison by saying: "The crime committed by Eve when she believed the serpent, was repaired by Mary when she believed the Archangel." St. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Cyprian, the oracle of Africa, all alike honour Mary, and, saluting her as the Mother of God, invoke her aid. Saint Justina has recourse to Mary to protect her chastity. The Pantheon was consecrated to St. Mary and the martyrs. Again, as time wore on, and with the triumph of Christianity, the chair of Peter was universally revered, then, from every quarter of the earth, from the

east to the west, from the north to the south, resounded in one vast and mighty chorus the praises of the Virgin. Ah! could you but hear how every one of these voices harmonize together, as through all the centuries they answer, as it were, in alternate choirs, flooding the world with the sweet cadences of filial piety, and songs of holy enthusiasm, with which they delight to celebrate Mary as at once the most renowned, the holiest, and sweetest of God's creatures! From every quarter the joyous cry resounded: "Mary, Mary, Mary is the handmaid of the Lord! Mary is the Mother of God! Mary, Virgin and mother!

Ah! yes, she is great! Neither Apostle, Patriarch, nor Prophet, neither Confessor nor Virgin, no, not even the Cherubim, or the Seraphim, or any other creature can equal her. Mary, the Mother of God. I hail thee, therefore, O Mother of God. I hail thee, O crown and glory of the Church, and entreat thee to pray for us.

We have heard St. John; we have heard St. Gregory, learned among theologians; we have heard from Europe, Asia, Africa, Rome, and Constantinople. Yes, from the time of those great Doctors who were honoured by paganism itself, and are now revered by the Church up to St. Bernard and their own times, and thence down to St. Francis de Sales and our own days, Mary has ever been acclaimed, Mary has ever been the object of the praises and benedictions of the Church of God. And not only has it been so with the Church herself, but also among the people of all the great nations who have been cradled in her bosom. The Poles call Mary the Great Queen, while Portugal made a decree ordering men to fast on Saturday in her honour. In

Hungary, as in England, great honours were decreed to Mary. France calls itself the Kingdom of Mary. And our Italy, our Italy may call itself the land of Mary, so full is it of churches and chapels where the dear image of Mary is loved and venerated. The greatest men in all nations honour Mary; the noblest of princes kneel at her name; the Flemish barons place their order under her protection, and take her name as a war cry; while the Venetian doges are depicted in the act of kneeling to her. It is not, however, only the Saints and the great men of the earth who act thus, but men of science also venerate Mary. Descartes and Montaigne are painted in the act of reciting the rosary. Artists, again, have been pre-eminently inspired by Mary. The celebrated Overbeck, in one of his inimitable pictures, represents Mary as the inspiring genius of the fine arts. In short, from Dante, who places Mary in the place of honour in Paradise, charming by her sweet smile the celestial hierarchy, to the popular songs which celebrate her name in their graceful thoughts, there is not a single lyre which has not made music in honour of the Blessed Virgin.

From the rude frescoes of the catacombs to the sublime aspirations of Raphael and the dazzling conceptions of Murillo, the painter of the immortal *Conception*, there is not a brush but has laboured at the loved and honoured task of reflecting the image and the glory of Mary. So, too, from the sumptuous basilica, stateliest triumph of urban art, to the lowly heritage on snow-clad mountain heights, or lost in the solitude of the valleys below, there is not the *Domus Dei* which has not echoed and re-echoed the praises of Mary. And from the exquisite harmonies of

Rossini's Stabat Mater, to the simple hymns of our month of May, there is no note but is inspired by love to Mary.

Moreover, who can enumerate all the religious and knightly orders, all the congregations, guilds, and confraternities born and matured under the name and patronage of Mary.

Yes, O most blessed Virgin, you said it when in the ecstacy of your humility, in the enthusiasm of your gratitude you answered Elizabeth, "*Ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes*" (From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed), St. Luke i. 48.

Have we, however, ever sufficiently considered these words which alone would suffice to show the divine origin of Christianity? "*Ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.*" Who, my brethren, can have opened her eyes to scrutinize the future? Who showed her her future glory? It could be but God alone.

The fame of great conquerors, of great inventors, of great artists, last scarcely a century; yet, behold a young virgin who says that *all ages* shall call her blessed. She says it in the house of her cousin St. Elizabeth, then retires into her beloved obscurity, nor is to be seen again but at rare intervals, until she reappears on the sad path to Calvary. Subsequent events, however, have confirmed the words of the Virgin Mother; they were prophetic, and have through all the intervening ages been fulfilled to the letter. But how could men, so prone as they are to forget, remember, as they have done, a Mother they never knew, and, furthermore, a Mother so poor that, even in giving birth to her Divine Son, she was compelled to seek the shelter of a mere shed? Could there be a more unlikely object of undying

remembrance and benediction? Surely not! Yet, notwithstanding all this, my brethren, events have demonstrated that never human lips pronounced words more completely and exactly fulfilled. It is, it can only be, that her Divine Son has willed this tribute of respect towards His blessed Mother, It is He who has called, and calls upon all nations to hymn the praises of love and devotion for His Mother, who, by His own gracious gift, is also the Mother of each of us. Hence we ought to exclaim, *This is, indeed, the work of the most High and admirable in our eyes.*

If you ask me why time, which destroys all things, has only confirmed and spread the cultus of Mary, I answer first, because such is the will of God, who wills that we should have Mary for our mother, and secondly, because the cultus of Mary answers to the needs and aspirations of our hearts.

Man had a Saviour, it is true, but our good Jesus knew it was not enough, but that our hearts needed a *mother* also. Thus he gave us a mother in the person of His own dear Mother Mary. And what word is so sweet to the lips, or such balm to the heart, as the holy name of *mother!*

Is not the *mother* the touching symbol of all those sentiments which we call goodness, tenderness, sacrifice, devotion? Well, Mary is Mother of Jesus, who was called by St. Paul the first born of all creatures, and she is our Mother, too, since by the incarnation we are become the brethren of Jesus. But it was established in the designs of Divine Providence that this maternity should be consecrated by grief, in order that, through her sufferings for us, we might be so much the dearer to Mary. It was in tears and poverty that Mary

gave birth to Jesus for us. A stable first sheltered her Divine Infant, and she continued to suffer for our sakes till she crowned it all in the culminating woes of Calvary. What must have been her grief as she beheld Jesus hanging on the cross, torn, bleeding, and at the point of death! See, there, Mary weeping at the foot of the Cross, and listen to the dying words of Jesus: "Woman," He said, showing her John, who represented humanity, "Woman, behold thy son:" then, turning on John those eyes so sad and full of love, and soon to be closed in death, He said, "Behold thy mother." These words created in Mary's heart the sentiment of maternal solicitude, the depth and tenderness of which is hers alone. The love that burned for us in the Sacred Heart of Jesus was then kindled in that of Mary, who then became more emphatically our Mother, and not only our Mother, but at the same time our help, our defence, our advocate and refuge.

And all these good things God has given us in those fruitful words: *Behold thy Mother!* The gift of His own dear Mother was the last testament of Jesus' love for us, the last trait of His tenderness, for He had already given us all else, His tears, His sweat, His labours, His pains, His Precious Blood, His graces. He had already bequeathed us Himself in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. He had poured Himself out for us, exhausted all His treasures, and it seemed that love could go no farther. But now, when all seemed done, and that nothing remained to be given, He gives us for ours His own Mother Mary. And what a Mother! No words can tell. Ah, my brethen. do you feel all the sweetness, all the consolation that these words enshrine? The Mother of Jesus is our

Mother. It is recorded of a pure soul, now one of the Blessed in heaven, that she had ever on her lips and in her heart the sweet words: "The Mother of Jesus is my Mother." Need it be told that the joys of Paradise were reflected on her face?

Let me ask, now, how can we show our gratitude to Jesus for this priceless gift, and how can we derive the greatest benefit from it? By reposing a boundless filial confidence in Mary, by constantly having recourse to her. Let us betake ourselves to Mary in whatever state we find ourselves; however bad our case, she will find means to plead it; however deep our wounds, she will know how to heal them; however hard our hearts, she will be able to soften them Yes, brethren, let us have recourse to her, not once, not a hundred times, but every day, morning, noon, and night; in short, always. She will dispel all darkness, give us light, soothe our sorrows, calm our fears, and procure our eternal salvation. Do you doubt it, do you doubt her *power?* But she is the Mother of *God;* she can, therefore, obtain every request. All that God commands is done; and whatever Mary asks she obtains. Yet you doubt her *kindness*, perhaps? But she is *our* Mother.

O, thrice unhappy he who does not understand what this word implies. Mother! Name ever fragrant with love that no words can describe. He who understands it not cannot have known a mother's care and love, can never have basked in the sunshine of her smile, or known her tender caresses, the kiss that chased grief from his breast and tears from his eyes, nor his heart leapt for joy at the tender embraces that tell of brief absence now ended. Mary is our Mother. Her goodness

far exceeds our wretchedness Let us, then, have constant recourse to her.

Mothers, go to Mary and entrust your children to her. Maidens, confide your chastity to Mary. Young men, entrust your courage and your virtue to Mary. And you, beloved poor of Jesus Christ, confide to Mary all your miseries; and all you who are unhappy confide to her your pains and sorrows. Confide implicitly in Mary and you will be comforted, for though an earthly mother may forget or abandon her children, yet Mary forgets not nor abandons hers.

One evening, after the battle of Abdelkader, an officer of the staff lay mortally wounded, in his tent, in the pale light of a feeble lamp. On his left were his wife and daughter; on his right a young doctor, his son. His wife and daughter had in vain implored him to think of his soul. The son had refused to join his prayers with those of his mother and sister. He would none of religion. More than once he had abused his position by deriding the young soldiers who had desired to die in the faith and assisted by the rites of their religion. All at once a crisis took place; the two women believing it to be the last flickering of the death agony, fell on their knees, crying "Mary, Mary." Even the young doctor fell on his knees and instinctively uttered the name of "Mary." At this so sweet and so powerful word the dying man opened his eyes, and murmured, "What was that you said? What name did you pronounce? Did you say Mary?" "Yes, Mary," they answered, amidst their tears. And then he told them how, in 1812, when he was nineteen years of age, he had made his first communion in the mountains of France. In those days France needed soldiers, because so many had fallen in the

late wars, and, for this reason, even the youngest men were accepted. He himself was called, and the curé, before parting from him, said, "My child, remember this advice, never deny anything that shall be asked of you in the name of Mary." And now, when something was asked of him in her name, could he deny it? The military chaplain was at once summoned, the officer made his confession, received extreme unction, and died with the rosary on his lips, saying to his dear ones, "Adieu, we shall meet in heaven." The son passed the whole night by the corpse of his father—that father whom, rather than let him listen to the voice of duty, he would have seen perish before his eyes. In the morning his mind was made up. He had been the apostle of evil, he would now be the apostle of good. He resigned his commission, crossed the seas, and knocked at the door of a monastery, where he begged to be admitted to the novitiate. His prayer was granted, and, after severe trials and three years' study of theology, he was ordained a priest. Filled with holy zeal he asked to be sent on a foreign mission, and bathed with his sweat the soil of the Indies, where he was taken by the infidels, who tore his flesh to pieces with their irons. The next day he died the death of a martyr.

The daughter became a sister of charity, lavishing her love on, and yielding her assistance to, the unfortunate until she herself died a victim to duty. The mother also died the death of a saint. And what, brethren, what obtained all this? Three persons falling on their knees, and uttering the holy name of "Mary." The heart of Mary was touched. Mary prayed, and God heard her.

Then, my brethren, if we have friends or relations far from the truth, let us, too, breathe that

name so fruitful in benedictions, and pray from our hearts, "Mary, Mary, Mary." She, whom all generations shall call Blessed, will be touched, will pray for us, and will obtain from our Lord God that favour which our hearts desire, the grace of light, the grace of happiness and peace for the erring ones.

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